

Lucy Aschewen L¹ 5

THEODOSIUS:

O R,

The Force of Love:

A

TRAGEDY,

ACTED

By their Royal Highnesses Ser-
vants, at the *Duke's Theatre*.

Written by Mr. NAT. LEE.

— *Nec minus periculum ex magna
Fama quam ex mala.* Tacit.

L O N D O N :

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To her GRACE the
Duchess of RICHMOND.

M A D A M,

THE Reputation that this PLAY received on the Stage, some few Errors excepted, was more than I could well hope from so censorious an Age, from whom I ask but so much necessary Praise as will serve, once or twice a Year at most, to gain their good Company, and just keep me alive.

*There is not now that Mankind that was then,
When as the Sun and Man did seem to strive
(Joint-Tenants of the World) who should survive:
When if a slow-pac'd Star had stoln away
From the Observer's marking, he might stay
Two or three hundred Years to see't agen,
And then make up his Observation plain.*

Dr. Donn.

For 'tis impossible in our limited Time (and I bring his Opinion to back my own, who is without comparison the best Writer of the Age) to present our Judges a Poem half so perfect as we could make it. I must acknowledge, *Madam*, with all humility, I ought to have taken more

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Time and more Pains in this *Tragedy*, because it is dedicated to your Grace, who being the best Judge, (and therefore can, when you please, make us tremble) yet with exceeding Mercy have pardon'd the Defects of *Theodosius*, and given it your entire Approbation. My Genius, *Madam*, was your Favourite when the Poet was unknown, and openly receiv'd your Smiles before I had the Honour to pay your Grace the most submissive Gratitude for so illustrious and advantageous a Protection. To let the World too know that you do not think it beneath you to be officiously Good, even from extremest Heights, to discern the lowest Creatures, and give them all the noblest Influence you can, you brought Her Royal Highness just at the exigent time, whose single Presence on the Poet's Day, is a Subsistence for him all the Year after. Ah, *Madam*, if all the short-liv'd Happiness that miserable Poets can enjoy consist in Commendation only; nay, if the most part are content with popular Breath, and even for that are thankful; How shall I express my self to your Grace, who by a particular Goodness and innate Sweetness, merely for the sake of doing well, have thus rais'd me above my self? To have your Grace's Favour is, in a word, to have the Applause of the whole Court, who are its noblest Ornament, magnificent and eternal Praise. Something there is in your Mien so much above that we vulgarly call Charming, that to me it seems Adorable, and your Presence almost Divine, whose dazzling and majestick Form is a proper Mansion for the most elevated Soul. And let me tell the World, nay, sighing, speak it to a barbarous Age (I cannot help calling it so, when

The Epistle Dedicatory.

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I think of *Rome* and *Greece*) your extraordinary Love for Heroick Poetry is not the least Argument to shew the Greatness of your Mind, and fulness of Perfection. To hear you speak with that infinite Sweetness and Chearfulness of Spirit that is natural to your Grace, is methinks to hear our tutelar Angels: 'Tis to bemoan the present malicious Times, and remember the Golden Age. But to behold you too, is to make Prophets quite forget their Heaven, and bind the Poets with eternal Rapture.

*Here pure and eloquent Blood
Stoke in her Cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
That one might almost say, her Body thought.
You for whose Body God made better Clay,
Or took Souls Stuff, such as shall late decay,
Or such as need small Change at the Last Day.*
Dr. Donne.

Ziphares and *Semandra* were first your Grace's Favourites; and tho I ought not, *Madam*, to praise your Wit by your Judgment of my Painting, yet I must say, such Characters every Dauber cannot draw. It has been often observed against me, That I abound in ungovern'd Fancy; but, I hope, the World will pardon the Sallies of Youth: Age, Despondence, and Dulness come too fast of themselves. I commend no Man for keeping the beaten Road; but I am sure the noble Hunters that follow the Game, must leap Hedges and Ditches sometimes, and run at all, or never come in to the fall of the Quarry. My comfort is, I cannot be so ridiculous a Creature to any Man as I am to my self: For who should know the

The Epistle Dedicatory.

House so well as the good Man at home? who, when his Neighbours come to see him, still sets the best Rooms to view; and if he be not a wilful Ass, keeps the Rubbish and Lumber in some dark Hole, where no body comes but himself, to mortify at melancholy Hours. But how then, *Madam*, in this unsuitable Condition, how shall I answer the infinite Honours and Obligations your Grace has laid upon me? Your Grace, who is the most beautiful Idea of Love and Glory; who to that Divine Composition, have the noblest and best-natur'd Wit in the World. All I can promise, *Madam*, and be able to perform, is, that your Grace shall never see a Play of mine that shall give Offence to Modesty and Virtue; and what I humbly offer to the World, shall be of use at least, and I hope deserve Imitation; which is, or ought to be, I am sure, the Design of all *Tragedies* and *Comedies* both antient and modern. I should presume to promise my self too some Success in things of this nature, if your Grace (in whom the Charms of Beauty, Wit, and Goodness seem reconcil'd) at a leisure Hour would condescend to correct with your excellent Judgment, the Errors of,

M A D A M,

Your Grace's most Humble,

most Obedient,

and Devoted Servant,

Nat. Lee.

P R O.

PROLOGUE.

WIT long oppress'd, and fill'd at last with Rage,
 Thus in a sullen Mood rebukes the Age.
 What Loads of Fame do modern Heroes bear,
 For an inglorious, long, and lazy War?
 Who for some Skirmish, or a safe Retreat,
 (Not to be dragg'd to Battle) are call'd Great.
 But oh! what do ambitious Statesmen gain,
 Who into private Chests whole Nations drain?
 What Sums of Gold they hoard, is daily known,
 To all Mens Cost, and sometimes to their own.
 Your Lawyer too, that like an O Yes bawls,
 That drowns the Market-Higler in the Stalls,
 That seems begot, conceiv'd, and born in Brawls,
 Yet thrives: He and his Crowd get what they please,
 Swarming all Term-time thro' the Strand like Bees,
 They buz at Westminster, and lye for Fees.
 The Godly too their Ways of Getting have;
 But none so much as your Fanatic Knave:
 Wisely the wealthiest Livings they refuse,
 Who by the fattest Bishopricks would lose;
 Who with short Hair, large Ears, and small blue Band,
 True Rogues, their own, not God's Elect command.
 Let Pigs then be profane; but Broth's allow'd,
 Possess and Christian Caudles may be good
 Meet-helps, to reinforce a Brother's Blood:
 Therefore each Female Saint he doth advise,
 With Groans, and Hums, and Ha's, and Gogling Eyes,
 To rub him down, and make the Spirit rise:
 While with his Zeal, transported from the Ground,
 He mounts and sanctifies the Sisters round.

*On Poets only no kind Star e'er smil'd,
 Curst Fate has damn'd 'em ev'ry Mother's Child :
 Therefore he warns his Brothers of the Stage,
 To write no more for an ungrateful Age.
 Think what penurious Masters you have serv'd ;
 Tasso run mad, and noble Spenser starv'd.
 Turn then, whoe'er thou art that canst write well,
 Thy Ink to Gall, and in Lampoons excel.
 Forswear all Honesty, traduce the Great,
 Grow Impudent, and rail against the State ;
 Bursting with Spleen, abroad thy Pasquils send,
 And chuse some Libel spreader for thy Friend :
 The Wit and Want of Timon point thy Mind,
 And for thy Satir-subject chuse Mankind.*



E P I L O G U E.

*T*HRICE happy they that never writ before ;
 How pleas'd and bold they quit the safer Shore :
 Like some new Captain of the City Bands,
 That with big Looks in Finsbury commands,
 Swell'd with huge Ale, he cries, Beat, beat a Drum ;
 Pox on the French King, uds-bud let him come :
 Give me ten thousand Red-Coats, and alloo,
 We'll firk his Crequi and his Conde too.
 Thus the young Scriblers Mankind's Sense disdain ;
 For Ignorance is sure to make 'em vain ;
 But far from Vanity, or dangerous Pride,
 Our cautious Poet courts you to his Side :
 For why should you be scorn'd, to whom are due
 All the good Days that ever Authors knew ?
 If ever gay, 'tis you that make 'em fine ;
 The Pis and Boxes make the Poet dine,
 And he scarce drinks, but of the Criticks Wine.

EPILOGUE.

9

Old Writers should not for Vain-glory strive ;
 But, like old Mistresses, think how to thrive ;
 Be fend of every thing their Keepers say,
 At least till they can live without a Play.
 Like one that knows the Trade and has been bit,
 She doats and fawns upon her wealthy Cit,
 And swears, she loves him merely for his Wit.
 Another more untaught than a Walloon,
 Antick and ugly, like an old Baboon,
 She swears, is an accomplish'd Beau-garçon :
 Turns with all Winds, and sails with all Desires ;
 All Hearts in City, Town, and Court she fires,
 Young callow Lords, lean Knights, and driv'ling Squires.
 She in resistless Flattery finds her Ends,
 Gives Thanks for Fools, and makes ye all her Friends ;
 So should wise Poets sooth an aukward Age,
 For they are Prostitutes upon the Stage :
 To stand on Points were foolish and ill-bred,
 As for a Lady to be nice in Bed :
 Your Wills alone must their Performance measure,
 And you may turn 'em every way for Pleasure.



Drama-

2
3
Old

Dramatis Personæ.

Theodosius,
Varanes,
Marcian,
Lucius,
Atticus, *Chief Priest*,
Leontine,
Chorus.

Mr. Williams.
Mr. Betterton.
Mr. Smith.
Mr. Wiltshire.
Mr. Bowman.
Mr. Leitherfull.

Pulcheria,
Athenais,
Marina.
Flavilla.
Julia.
Delia.
Attendants, Singers.

Mrs. Betterton.
Mrs. Barry.

The SCENE, *Constantinople.*



THE



THEODOSIUS :

O R,

The Force of LOVE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A stately Temple, which represents the Christian Religion, as in its first Magnificence : Being but lately establish'd at Rome and Constantinople. The side Scenes shew the horrid Tortures with which the Roman Tyrants persecuted the Church ; and the flat Scene, which is the Limit of the Prospect, discovers an Altar richly adorn'd, before it Constantine, suppos'd kneels, with Commanders about him, gazing at a bloody Cross in the Air, which being encompass'd with many Angels, offers it self to view, with those Words distinctly written, (In hoc signo vinces !) Instruments are heard, and many Attendants : The Ministers at Divine Service walk busily up and down, till Atticus the Chief of all the Priests, and Successor of St. Chrysostom, in rich Robes, comes forward with the Philosopher Leontine ; the Waiters in Ranks bowing all the way before him.

A Chorus heard at distance.

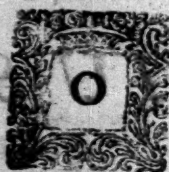
PRepare, prepare ! the Rites begin,
 Let none unhallow'd enter in ;
 The Temple with new Glory shines,
 Adorn the Altars, wash the Shrines,
 And purge the Place from Sin.

Enter

12 THEODOSIUS: or,

Enter Atticus and Leontine.

Attic.



brings.

H, *Leontine*! was ever Morn like this,
Since the Celestial Incarnation dawn'd?
I think no Day since that, such Glory
gave
To Christian Altars, as this Morning

Leont. Great Successor of holy *Chrysostom*,
Who now triumphs above a Saint of Honour;
Next in degree to those bright Sons of Heav'n,
Who never fell, nor stain'd their orient Beams:
What shall I answer? How shall I approach you,
Since my Conversion, which your Breath inspir'd?

Attic. To see this Day, the Emperor of the East
Leaves all the Pleasures that the Earth can yield,
That Nature can bestow, or Art invent,
In his Life's spring, and bloom of gawdy Years,
To undergo the Penance of a Cloyster,
Confin'd to narrow Rooms, and gloomy Walks,
Fasting, and Exercises of Devotion,
Which from his Bed at Midnight must awake him;
Methinks, O *Leontine*! is something more
Than yet Philosophy could ever reach.

Leont. True, *Atticus*, you have amaz'd my Reason.

Attic. Yet more, to our Religion's lasting Honour,
Marina and *Flavilla*, two young Virgins,
Imperial born, cast in the fairest Mould
That e'er the hands of Beauty form'd for Woman;
The Mirrors of our Court, where Chastity
And Innocence might copy spotless Lustre,
To Day with *Theodosius* leave the World.

Leont. Methinks at such a glorious Resignation,
Th' Angelick Orders should at once descend
In all the Paint and Drapery of Heav'n,
With charming Voices, and with lulling Strings,
To give full Grace to such triumphant Zeal.

Attic. No, *Leontine*, I fear there is a fault;
For when I last confess'd the Emperor,

Whether

The Force of Love.

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Whether Disgust and melancholy Blood,
From restless Passions urg'd not this Divorce ;
He only answer'd me with Sighs and Blushes :
'Tis sure, his Soul is of the tenderest Make ;
Therefore I'll tax him strictly : but, my Friend,
Why should I give his Character to you,
Who, when his Father sent him into *Persia*,
Were by that mighty Monarch then appointed
To breed him with his Son, the Prince *Varanes* ?

Leont. And what will raise your Admiration, is,
That two such different Tempers should agree :
You know that *Theodosius* is compos'd
Of all the softness that should make a Woman :
Judgment almost like Fear fore-runs his Actions ;
And he will poise an Injury so long,
As if he had rather pardon than revenge it.
But the young *Persian* Prince quite opposite,
So fiery fierce, that those who view him nearly,
May see his haughty Soul still mounting in his Face,
Yet did I study these so different Tempers,
Till I at last had form'd a perfect Union,
As if two Souls did but inform one Body :
A Friendship that may challenge all the World,
And at the proof be matchless !

Attic. I long to read
This gallant Prince, who, as you have inform'd me,
Comes from his Father's Court to see our Emperor.

Leont. So he intended till he came to *Athens* ;
And at my homely Board beheld my Daughter ;
Where, as Fate order'd, she who never saw
The Glories of a Court, bred up to Books
In Closets, like a Sibyl : She, I say,
Long since from *Persia* brought by me to *Athens*,
Unskill'd in Charms, but those which Nature gave her,
Wounded this scornful Prince : In short, he forc'd me
To wait him hither, with deep Protestations,
That moment that bereft him of the sight
Of *Athenais*, gave him certain Death.
But see my Daughter honour'd with his Presence.

B

Enter

Enter Varanes and Athenais.

Vara. 'Tis strange ! O *Athenais* ! wondrous, all
Wondrous the Shrines, and wonderful the Altars !
The Martyrs, tho but drawn in painted Flames,
Amaze me with the Image of their Suff'rings :
Saints canoniz'd, that dar'd with *Roman* Tyrants :
Hermits that liv'd in Caves, and fed with Angels ;
By *Orosma*des, it is wondrous all.

That bloody Cross, in yonder Azure Sky,
Above the Head of kneeling *Constantine* ;
Inscrib'd about with Golden Characters,
Thou shalt o'ercome in this. If it be true,
I say again, by Heav'n, 'tis wondrous strange.

Athen. O Prince, if thus Imagination stirs you,
A Fancy rais'd from Figures in dead Walls,
How would the sacred Breath of *Atticus*
Inspire your Breast, purge all your Dross away,
And drive this *Athenais* from your Soul,
To make a Virgin room, whom yet the Mould
Of your rude Fancy cannot comprehend ?

Vara. What says my Fair ? Drive *Athenais* from me !
Start me not into Frenzy, lest I rail
At all Religion, and fall out with Heav'n :
And what is she alas ! that should supplant thee ?
Were she the Mistress of the World, as fair
As Winter Stars, or Summer-setting Suns,
And thou set by in Nature's plainest Dress,
With that chaste modest Look when first I saw thee ;
The Heiress of a poor Philosopher ; [*Recorders ready*
I swear by all I wish, by all I love, *to flourish.*
Glory and thee, I would not lose a Thought,
Nor cast an Eye that way, but rush to thee,
To these lov'd Arms, and lose my self for ever.

Athen. Forbear, my Lord.

Vara. O cruel *Athenais* !
Why dost thou put me off, who pine to death ?
And thrust me from thee when I would approach thee ?
Can there be ought in this ? Curse then thy Birth-right,

The Force of Love.

15

Thy glorious Titles and ill-suited Greatness,
Since *Athenais* scorns thee : Take again
Your ill-tim'd Honours ; take 'em, take 'em Gods !
And change me to some humble Villager,
If so at last for Toils at scorching Noon,
In mowing Meadows, or in reaping Fields,
At Night she will but crown me with a Smile,
Or reach the Bounty of her Hand to bless me.

Athen. When Princes speak, their Subjects should be
silent ;

Yet with Humility I would demand,
Wherein appears my Scorn, or my Aversion ?
Have I not for your sake abandon'd home,
Where I had vow'd to spend my calmer Days ?
But you perhaps imagine it but little
For a poor Maid to follow you abroad,
Especially the Daughter of old *Leontine* ;
Yet I must tell you Prince ———

Vara. I cannot bear
Those Frowns : I have offended, but forgive me.
For who, *Athenais*, that is toss'd
With such tempestuous Tides of Love as I,
Can steer a steady Course ? Retire, my Fair,

[*Recorders flourish.*]

Hark ! the Solemnities are now beginning,
And *Theodosius* comes : Hide, hide thy Charms ;
If to his clouded Eyes such Day should break,
The Royal Youth who dotes to Death for Love,
I fear would forfeit all his Vows to Heav'n,
And fix upon thy World, thy World of Beauty. [*Exeunt.*]

*Enter Theodosius leading Marina and Flavilla (all three
dress'd in white) followed by Pulcheria.*

Theo. Farewel, *Pulcheria* ! and I pray, no more :
For all thy kind Complaints are lost upon me.
Have I not sworn the World and I must part ?
Fate has proclaim'd it, therefore weep no more,
Wound not the tenderest Part of *Theodosius*,
My yielding Soul, that would expire in Calms !

16 THEODOSIUS; or,

Wound me not with thy Tears, and I will tell thee,
Yet ere I take my last farewell for ever,
The Cause of all my Sufferings : Oh, my Sister !
A bleeding Heart, the Stings of pointed Love,
What Constitution soft as mine can bear ?

Pulch. My Lord, my Emperor, my dearest Brother,
Why all this while did you conceal it from me ?

Theo. Because I was asham'd to own my Weakness ;
I knew thy sharper Wit, and stricter Wisdom
Would dart Reproofs, which I could not endure.
Draw near, Oh *Atticus*, and mark me well,
For never yet did my complaining Spirit
Unlade this weighty Secret upon him,
Nor groan a Syllable of her Oppression.

Attic. Concealment was a Fault ; but speak at large,
Make bare the Wound, and I will pour in Balm.

Theo. 'Tis Folly all, and Fondness—Oh, Remem-
brance !

Why dost thou open thus my Wound again,
And from my Heart call down those warmer Drops
That make me die with shame ? Hear then, *Pulcheria* !
Some few preceding Days before I left
The *Persian* Court, hunting one Morning early,
I lost my self and all the Company,
Still wandering on as Fortune would direct me :
I past a Rivulet, and lighted on
The sweetest Solitude I ever saw !
When streight, as if Enchantment had been there,
Two charming Voices drew me till I came,
Where divers Arbors over-look'd the River.
Upon the Osier Bank two Women sat,
Who, when their Song was ended, talk'd to one,
Who, basking, stood far in the Crystal Stream.
But, Oh, what Thought can paint that fair Perfection,
Or give a Glimpse of such a naked Glory ?
Not Sea-born *Venus*, in the Courts beneath,
When the green Nymphs first kiss'd her coral Lips,
All polish'd, fair, and wash'd with orient Beauty,
Could in my dazzling Fancy match her Brightness.

Attic. Think where you are.

Theo.

The Force of Love.

17

Theo. Oh! Sir, you must forgive me,
The chaste Enthusiastick Form appears,
As when I saw her; yet I swear, *Pulcheria*,
Had cold *Diana* been a Looker on,
She must have prais'd the Virtues of the Virgin:
The *Satyrs* could not grin, for she was veil'd:
Nothing immodest, from her naked Bosom
Down to her Knees, the Nymph was wrapt in Lawn:
But, Oh for me! for me, that was too much!
Her Legs, her Arms, her Hands, her Neck, her Breasts,
So nicely shap'd, so matchless in their Lustre!
Such All Perfection, that I took whole Draughts
Of killing Love, and ever since have languish'd.
With lingering Surfeits of her fatal Beauty!
Alas, too fatal sure! Oh, *Atticus*!
Forgive me, for my Story now is done,
The Nymph was drest, and with her two Companions,
Having descry'd me, shriek'd and fled away,
Leaving me motionless, till *Leontine*,
Th' Instructor of my Youth, by chance came in,
And wak'd me from the Wonder that entranc'd me.

Attic. Behold, my Lord, the Man whom you have
nam'd,

The Harbinger of Prince *Varanes*, here.

Theo. Oh *Leontine*! ten thousand Welcomes meet thee!
Thou Foster-Father of my tender Youth,
Who rear'd the Plant, and prun'd it with such Care,
How shall I look upon thee, who am fallen
From all the Principles of manlier Reason,
By thee infus'd, to more than Woman's Weakness?
Now by the Majesty Divine, that awes
This sacred Place, I swear you must not kneel:
And tell me, for I have a thousand things
To ask thee; Where, where is my godlike Friend?
Is he arriv'd, and shall I see his Face,
Before I'm cloyster'd from the World for ever?

Leont. He comes, my Lord, with all th' expecting Joys
Of a young promis'd Lover; from his Eyes
Big Hopes look forth, and boiling Fancy forms.

18 THEODOSIUS; or,

Nothing but *Theodosius* still before him;
His Thought, his every Word, is *Theodosius*.

Theo. Yet *Leontine*, yet answer me once more:
With Tremblings I demand thee,
Say — hast thou seen? Oh! has that heav'nly Form
Appear'd to thee again? Behold he's dumb:
Proceed then to the solemn last farewell;
Never was Man so willing, and prepar'd.

Enter Varanes, Arantes, Attendants.

Vara. Where is my Friend! Oh, where is my belov'd,
My *Theodosius*! point him out ye Gods,
That I may press him dead betwixt my Arms;
Devour him thus with over-hasty Joys,
That languish at his Breast, quite out of Breath,
And cannot utter more.

Theo. Thou mightiest Pleasure!
And greatest Blessing, that kind Heav'n could send,
To glad my parting Soul, a thousand Welcomes!
Oh! when I look on thee, new Starts of Glory
Spring in my Breast, and with a backward Bound
I run the Race of lusty Youth again.

Vara. By Heav'n it joys me too, when I remember
Our thousand Pastimes, when we borrow'd Names;
Alcides, I, and Thou, my dearest *Theosus*,
When thro' the Woods we chas'd the foaming Boar,
With Hounds that open'd like *Thessalian* Bulls,
Like Tygers flud, and sanded as the Shore,
With Ears, and Chests, that dash'd the Morning Dew:
Driv'n with the Sport, as Ships are tost in Storms,
We ran like Winds, and matchless was our Course:
Now sweeping o'er the Limit of a Hill,
Now with a full Career come thund'ring down
The Precipice, and sweat along the Vale.

Theo. Oh, glorious Time! and when the gathering
Clouds
Have call'd us home, say, Did we rest my Brother?
When on the Stage, to the admiring Court,
We strove to represent *Alcides*' Fury,

The Force of Love.

19

In all that raging Heat, and Pomp of Madness,
With which the stately *Seneca* adorn'd him ;
So lively drawn, and painted with such Horror,
That we were forc'd to give it o'er ; so loud
The Virgins shriek'd, so fast they dy'd away.

Vara. My *Theodosius* still ; 'tis my lov'd Brother ;
And by the Gods we'll see those Times agen !
Why then has Rumour wrong'd thee, that reported
Christian Enthusiasm had charm'd thee from us,
That drawn by Priests, and workt by Melancholy,
Thou hadst lain down the golden Reins of Empire,
And sworn thy self a Votary for ever ?

Theo. 'Tis almost true ; and had not you arriv'd,
The solemn Business had by this been ended.
This I have made the Empress of the *East*,
My elder Sister : These with me retire,
Devoted to the Pow'r whom we adore.

Vara. What Power is that that merits such Oblations ?
I thought the Sun more great and glorious,
Than any that ere mingled with the Gods ;
Yet even to him my Father never offer'd
More than a Hecatomb of Bulls and Horses.
Now by those golden Beams, that glad the World,
I swear it is too much : For one of these,
But half so bright, our God would drive no more,
He'd leave the darken'd Globe, and in some Cave
Enjoy such Charms for ever.

Attic. My Lord, forbear !
Such Language does not suit with our Devotion :
Nothing profane must dare murmur here,
Nor stain the hallow'd Beauties of the Place.
Yet thus far we must yield ; the Emperor
Is not enough prepar'd to leave the World.

Vara. Thus low, most Reverend of this sacred Place,
I kneel for Pardon, and am half converted,
By your Permission that my *Theodosius*
Return to my Embraces. Oh, my Brother !
Why dost thou droop ? there will be time enough
For Prayer and Fasting, and religious Vows ;
Let us enjoy, while yet thou art my own,

All

20 THEODOSIUS; or,

All the Magnificence of *Eastern Courts* ;
I hate to walk a lazy Life away :
Let's run the Race which Fate has set before us,
And post to the dark Goal.

Theo. Cruel Destiny !

Why am not I thus too? Oh, my *Varanes* !
Why are these costly Dishes set before me ?
Why do these Sounds of Pleasure strike my Ears ?
Why are these Joys brought to my sick Remembrance,
Who have no Appetite ; but am to Sense,
From Head to Foot, all a dead Palsy o'er ?

Vara. Fear not, my Friend, all shall be well again,
For I have thousand Ways, and thousand Stories
To raise thee up to Pleasure ; we'll unlock
Our fastest Secrets, shed upon each other
Our tender'st Cares, and quite unbar those Doors,
Which shall be shut to all Mankind beside.

Attic. Silence and Reverence are the Temple's Dues :
Therefore, while we pursue the sacred Rites,
Be these observ'd, or quit the awful Place.
Imperial Sisters, now Twin Stars of Heaven,
Answer the Successor of *Chrysostom* ;
Without least Reservation answer me,
By those harmonious Rules I charg'd ye learn.

Atticus Sings.

Attic. Canst thou, Marina, leave the World,
The World that is Devotion's Bane ;
Where Crowns are tost, and Scepters hurl'd,
Where Lust and proud Ambition reign ?

2 Priest. Can you your Costly Robes forbear,
To live with us in poor Attire ?
Can you from Courts to Cells repair,
To sing at Midnight in our Quire ?

3 Priest. Can you forget your golden Beds,
Where you might sleep beyond the Morn,

On

The Force of Love.

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*On Matts to lay your Royal Heads,
And have your beauteous Tresses shorn?*

*Attic: Can you resolve to fast all Day,
And weep and groan to be forgiv'n?
Can you in broken Slumbers pray,
And by Affliction merit Heaven?*

*Chor. Say, Votaries, can this be done?
While we the Grace Divine implore,
The World has lost, the Battle's won;
And Sin shall never charm ye more.*

*Marina The Gate to Bliss does open stand,
Sings. And all my Penance is in view;
The World upon the other hand
Cries out, Oh, do not bid adieu!*

*Yet, sacred Sirs, in these Extremes,
Where Pomp and Pride their Glories tell;
Where Youth and Beauty are the Themes,
And plead their moving Cause so well:*

*If ought that's vain my Thoughts possess,
Or any Passions govern here,
But what Divinity may bliss;
Oh, may I never enter there!*

*Flavilla What! what can Pomp or Glory do;
Sings. Or what can human Charms persuade,
That Mind that has a Heav'n in view,
How can it be by Earth betray'd?*

*No Monarch full of Youth and Fame,
The Joy of Eyes, and Nature's Pride,
Should once my Thoughts from Heav'n reclaim,
Tho now he woo'd me for his Bride.*

*Haste then, Oh haste! and take us in,
For ever lock Religion's Door,*

Secure

THEODOSIUS; or,

Secure us from the Charms of Sin,
And let us see the World no more.

Attic. Hark! hark! behold the heavenly Choir,
Sings. They cleave the Air in bright Attire,
And see his Lute each Angel brings,
And hark Divinely thus he sings!
To the Pow'rs Divine all Glory be given,
By Men upon Earth, and Angels in Heaven.

Scene shuts, and all the Priests with Marina and Flavilla
disappear.

Pulch. For ever gone! for ever parted from me!
Oh! Theodosius, till this cruel Moment
I never knew how tenderly I lov'd 'em;
But on this everlasting Separation,
Methinks my Soul has left me, and my Time
Of Dissolution points me to the Grave.

Theo. Oh, my *Voranes*, does not now thy Temper
Bate something of its Fire? dost thou not melt
In mere Compassion of my Sister's Fate,
And cool thy self with one relenting Thought?

Vara. Yes, my dar'd Soul rolls inward; Melancholy,
Which I ne'er felt before, now comes upon me;
And I begin to loath all human Greatness:
Oh! sigh not then, nor thy hard Fate deplore!
For, 'tis resolv'd, we will be Kings no more;
We'll fly all Courts, and Love shall be our Guide;
Love that's more worth than all the World beside.
Princes are barr'd the Liberty to roam,
The fetter'd Mind still languishes at home;
I golden Bands she treads the thoughtful Round,
Business and Cares eternally abound.

" And when for Air the Goddess would unbind,

" She's clogg'd with Scepters, and to Crowns confin'd.

[Exeunt.

ACT



ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter Pulcheria, Julia, Attendants.

Pulch. Hese Packets for the Emperor *Honorius*?
T Be swift, let the Agent haste to *Rome*—
 I hear, my *Julia*, that our General
 Is from the *Goths* return'd with Con-
 quest home.

Jul. He is; to day I saw him in the Presence,
 Sharp to the Courtiers, as he ever was,
 Because they went not with him to the Wars:
 To you he bows, and sues to kiss your Hand.

Pulch. He shall, my dearest *Julia*; oft I have told thee
 The Secret of my Soul: If e'er I marry,
Marcian's my Husband; he is a Man, my *Julia*,
 Whom I have study'd long, and found him perfect:
 Old *Rome* at every Glance looks thro' his Eyes,
 And kindles the Beholders: Some sharp Atoms
 Run thro' his Frame, which I could wish were out:
 He sickens at the Softness of the Emperor,
 And speaks too freely of our Female Court;
 Then sighs, comparing it with what *Rome* was.

Enter Marcian and Lucius.

Pulch. Ha! who are these that dare profane this Place
 With more than barb'rous Insolence?

Marc. At your Feet,
 Behold I cast the Scourge of these Offenders,
 And kneel to kiss your Hand.

Pulch. Put up your Sword,
 And e'er I bid you welcome from the Wars,
 Be sure you clear your Honour of this Rudeness;
 Or, *Marcian*, leave the Court.

Marc.

24 THEODOSIUS; or,

Marc. Thus then, Madam,
The Emperor receiv'd me with Affection,
Embrac'd me for my Conquests, and retir'd ;
When on a sudden all the gilded Flies
That buz about the Court came flut'ring round me :
This with affected Cringes, and minc'd Words,
Begg me to tell my Tale of Victories ;
Which done, he thanks me, slips behind his Fellow,
Whispers him in the Ear, then smiles and listens,
While I relate my Story once again.
A third comes in, and asks me the same Favour :
Whereon they laugh, while I still ignorant
Go on ; but one behind, more impudent,
Strikes on my Shoulder ; then they laugh'd out-right :
But then I guessing the Abuse too late,
Return'd my Knight behind a Box o'th' Ear ;
Then drew, and briefly told them they were Rascals.
They, laughing still, cry'd out the General's musty,
Whereon I drove 'em, Madam, as you saw :
This is in short the Truth, I leave the Judgment
To your own Justice ; If I have done ill,
Sentence me, and I'll leave the Court for ever.

Pulch. First you are welcome, *Marcian*, from the Wars,
And still when e'er occasion calls for Arms,
Heav'n send the Emperor a General,
Renown'd as *Marcian* : as to what is past,
I think the World will rather praise than censure
Pulcheria, when she pardons you the Action.

Marc. Gods ! Gods ! and thou great Founder of Old
Rome !

What is become of all that mighty Spirit,
That rais'd our Empire to a Pitch so high ?
Where is it pent ? What, but Almighty Power
Could thus confine it, that but some few Atoms
Now run thro' all the East and Occident ?

Pulch. Speak calmly, *Marcian*——

Marc. Who can be temperate,
That thinks as I do, Madam ? Why here's a Fellow,
I have seen him fight against a Troop of *Vandals*
In your Defence, as if he lov'd to bleed :

Com

The Force of Love.

25

Come to my Arms, my Dear! thou canst not talk,
But hast a Soul above the proudest of 'em.

Oh, Madam, when he has been all o'er Blood,
And hack'd with Wounds that seem'd to moutch his Praises;
I have seen him smile still as he push'd Death from him,
And with his Actions rally distant Fate.

Pulch. He has a noble Form.

Marc. Yet ev'n this Man,
That fought so bravely in his Country's Cause,
This excellent Man, this Morning in the Presence,
Did I see wrong'd before the Emperor,
Scorn'd and despis'd because he could not cringe,
Nor plant his Feet as some of them could do.
One said his Clothes were not well made, and damn'd
His Taylor——Another said, he look'd
As if he had not lost his Maiden-head.

If things are suffer'd to be thus, down all
Authority, Pre-eminence, Degree and Virtue,
Let *Rome* be never mention'd; no, in the Name
Of all the Gods, be she forgotten ever.

Effeminate *Persians*, and the *Lydian* Softness,
Make all your Fights, *Marcian* shall out no more:

For by my Arms it makes a Woman of me;
And my swollen Eyes run o'er to think this Worth,
This fuller Honour than the whole Court holds,
Should be ridiculous to Knaves and Fools;
Should starve for want of what is necessary
To Life's Convenience: When luxurious Bawds
Are so o'er-grown with Fat, and cramm'd with Riot,
That they can hardly walk without an Engine.

Pulch. Why did you not inform the Emperor?

Marc. Because he will not hear me: alas, good Man,
He flies from this bad World, and still when Wars
And Dangers come, he runs to his Devotions,
To your new thing, I know not what you call it,
Which *Constantine* began.

Pulch. How, *Marcian*! are not you of that
Religion which the Emperor owns?

Marc. No, Madam, if you'll see my naked Thought,
I am not of their Principle, that take

26 THEODOSIUS; or,

A Wrong ; so far from bearing with a Foe,
I would strike first, like old *Rome* ; I wou'd forth,
Elbow the neighbouring Nations round about,
Invade, enlarge my Empire to the Bounds
Of the too narrow Universe. Yes, I own
That I despise your holy Innovations.
I'm for the *Roman* Gods, for Funeral Piles,
For mounting Eagles, and the fancied Greatness
Of our Fore fathers. Methinks my heated Spirit
Cou'd utter things worth losing of my Head.

Pulch. Speak freely, *Marcian*, for I know thee honest.

Marc. Oh, Madam ! long, long may the Emperor live ;
But, I must say, his gentle Disposition
Suits not, alas, the Oriental Sway :
Bid him but look on *Pharamond* : Oh, Gods !
Awake him with the Image of that Spirit,
Which, like a Pyramid revers'd, is grown
Ev'n from a Point to the most dreadful Greatness :
His very Name already shakes the World ;
And still in Person, heading his first Squadrons,
Like the first *Cesar* o'er the hardy *Gauls*,
He seems another Thunderbolt of War.

Pulch. I oft have blam'd my Brother most for this,
That to my Hand he leaves the State-Affairs :
And how that sounds, you know——

Marc. Forgive me, Madam ;
I think that all the Greatness of your Sex,
Rome's Clelia, and the fam'd *Semiramis*,
With all th' *Amazonian* Valour too,
Meet in *Pulcheria* : yet, I say, forgive me,
If with reluctance I behold a Woman
Sit at the Empire's Helm, and steer the World.

Pulch. I stand rebuk'd——

Marc. Mark but the growing *French*.
The most auspicious Omen of their Greatness,
That I can guess, is their late *Salique* Law,
Bless'd by their Priests, their *Salii*, and pronounc'd
To stand for ever ; which excludes all Women
From the Imperial Crown : But, Oh ! I speak
The least of all those infinite Grievances,

Which

The Force of Love.

27

Which make the Subjects murmur : In the Army,
Tho I proceeded still like *Hannibal*,
And punish'd ev'ry Mutineer with Death ;
Yet, Oh ! it stabb'd me thro' and thro' the Soul,
To pass the Wretches Doom, because I knew
With Justice they complain'd ; for hard they fought,
And with their Blood earn'd that forbidden Bread,
Which some at Court, and great ones, tho un-nam'd,
Cast to their Hounds, while the poor Soldiers starv'd—

Pulch. Your Pity too in mournful Fellowship,
No doubt might sooth their Murmurs.

Marc. Yes, it did.

That I might put 'em once again in heart,
I said 'twas true, the Emperor was to blame,
Who dealt too coldly with his faithful Servants,
And paid their great Arrears by second hand :
I promis'd too, when we return'd to Court,
Things should be mended—
But how ! Oh Gods ! forgive my Blood this Transport !
To the eternal Shame of Female Counsels !
And to the Blast of *Theodosius*' Name,
Whom never warlike Chronicle shall mention !
Oh, let me speak it with a *Roman* Spirit,
We were receiv'd like undone Prodigals,
By curst ungrateful Stewards, with cold Looks,
Who yet got all by those poor Wretches Ruin ;
Like Malefactors, at the Hands of Justice.
I blush, I almost weep with bursting Rage :
If thus receiv'd, how paid our long Arrears ?
Why, as intrusted Misers pay the Rights
Of helpless Widows, or the Orphans Tears,
Oh Soldier ! for to thee, to thee I speak it,
Bawds for the Drudgery of Citizens Wives,
Would better pay debilitated Stallions.
Madam, I've said perhaps too much ; if so,
It matters not, for he who lies like me
On the hard Ground, is sure to fall no further.

Pulch. I have given you patient hearing, honest *Marc-*
(cian :
And, as far as I can see into your Temper,

28 THEODOSIUS; or,

I speak my serious Judgment in cold Blood,
With strictest Consultation on the matter ;
I think, this seeming plain and honest *Marcian*,
An exquisite and most notorious Traytor.

Marc. Ha ! Traytor !

Pulch. Yes, a most notorious Traytor.

Marc. Your Grandfather, whose Frown could awe the
World,

Would not have call'd me so—or if he had——

Pulch. You would have taken it—But to the Business,
Was't not enough ; Oh Heaven ! thou know'st too much !
At first to own your self an Infidel,
A bold Contemner even to Blasphemy,
Of that Religion which we all profess ;
For which your Heart's best Blood can ne'er suffice ;
But you must dare, with a seditious Army,
Thus to conspire against the Emperor ?
I mention not your Impudence to me,
Taxing the Folly of my Government
Ev'n to my Face : Such an Irreverence,
As sure no barb'rous *Vandal* would have urg'd ;
Beside your libelling all the Court, as if
You had engross'd the whole World's Honesty ;
And Flatterers, Fools, and Sycophants, and Knaves,
Such was your Language, did inhabit here.

Marc. You wrest my honest Meaning, by the Gods !
You do ; and if you thus go on, I feel
My struggling Spirit will no longer bear it.

Pulch. I thought the meaning of all rational Men
Should still be gather'd out of their Discourse ;
Nor are you so imprudent, without thinking,
To vent such Words, tho' now you fain would hide it ;
You find the Guilt, and baulk the Accusation :
But think not you shall scape so easily.
Once more I do confront you, as a Traytor ;
And as I am entrusted with full Pow'r,
Divest you, in the Name of *Theodosius*,
Of all your Offices, Commissions, Honours ;
Command you leave the Court within three Days,
Loyal, plain-dealing, honest *Marcian*.

Marc.

The Force of Love. 29

Marc. Gods! Gods!

Pulch. What now! ha! does the Traytor murmur?
If in three days; mark me, 'tis I that doom thee;
Rash inconsiderate Man, a Wretch beneath
The Torments I cou'd execute upon thee:
If after three days space thou'rt found in Court,
Thou dy'st; thy Head, thy Head shall pay the Forfeit.
Farewel: now rage; now rail and curse the Court,
Saucily dare to abuse the best of Princes,
And let thy lawless Tongue lash all it can;
Do, like a mad Man rave: deplore thy Fortune,
While Pages laugh at thee. Then haste to the Army,
Grow popular, and lead the Multitude;
Preach up thy Wrongs, and drive the giddy Beast
To kick at *Cesar*. Nay, if thou weep'st, I am gone.
Oh *Julia*! if I stay, I shall weep too.

Yet 'tis but just that I the Heart should see
Of him who once must lord it over me.

[*Ex. Pulch. &c.*]

Luc. Why do you droop, Sir—Come, no more o'this,
You are and shall be still our General;
Say but the Word, I'll fill the Hippodrome
With Squadrons that shall make the Emp'ror tremble;
We'll fire the Court about his Ears.
Methinks, like *Junius Brutus*, I have watch'd
An Opportunity, and now it comes:
Few Words and I are Friends; but, noble *Martian*,
If yet thou art not more than General,
Ere dead of Night, say *Lucius* is a Coward.

Marc. I charge thee in the Name of all the Gods,
Come back. I charge thee by the Name of Friend.
All's well, and I rejoice I am no General.
But hush! within three days we must be gone,
And then, my Friend, farewell to Ceremony.
We'll fly to some far distant lonely Village,
Forget our former State, and breed with Slaves;
Sweat in the Eye of Day, and when Night comes,
With Bodies coarsely fill'd, and vacant Souls,
Sleep like the labour'd Hinds, and never think;
For if I think again, I shall go mad.

C 3

Enter

30 THEODOSIUS; or,

Enter Leontine and Athenais, &c.

Therefore no thought. But see, we're interrupted.
Oh Court! Oh Emperor! yet let Death threaten,
I'll find a time. Till then be still my Soul——
No General now! a Member of thy Country,
But most corrupt, therefore to be cut off,
Loyal, plain-dealing, honest *Marcian*!
A Slave, a Traytor! Oh ye eternal Gods—— [Exeunt.]

Leont. So, *Athenais*! now our Compliment
To the young *Persian* Prince, is at an end:
What then remains but that we take our leave,
And bid him everlastingly farewell?

Athen. My Lord!

Leont. I say, that Decency requires
We should be gone, nor can you stay with Honour.

Athen. Most true, my Lord.

Leont. The Court is now at peace,
The Emperor's Sisters are retir'd for ever,
And he himself compos'd what hinders then,
But that we bid adieu to Prince *Varanes*?

Athen. Ah, Sir, why will you break my Heart?

Leont. I would not;
Thou art the only Comfort of my Age;
Like an old Tree I stand among the Storms,
Thou art the only Limb that I have left me, [She kneels.]
My dear green Branch; and how I prize thee, Child,
Heaven only knows! why dost thou kneel and weep?

Athen. Because you are so good, and will I hope
Forgive my Fault, who first occasion'd it.

Leont. I charg'd thee to receive and hear the Prince.

Athen. You did, and, O my Lord! I heard too much,
Too much I fear for my eternal Quiet.

Leont. Rise, *Athenais*! credit him who bears
More Years than thou: *Varanes* has deceiv'd thee.

Athen. How do we differ then? you judge the Prince
Impious and base; while I take Heav'n to witness,
I think him the most virtuous of Men:

Therefore take heed, my Lord, how you accuse him
Before

The Force of Love.

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Before you make the Tryal. Alas, *Varanes*,
If thou art false, there's no such thing on Earth
As solid Goodness, or substantial Honour.
A thousand times, my Lord, he has sworn to give me
(And I believe his Oaths) his Crown and Empire,
That day I make him Master of my Heart.

Leont. That day he'll make thee Mistress of his Power,
Which carries a foul Name among the Vulgar. ;
No, *Athenais* ! let me see thee dead,
Borne a pale Corps, and gently laid in Earth,
So I may say she's chaste and dy'd a Virgin,
Rather than view thee with these wounded Eyes
Seated upon the Throne of *Isdigerdes*,
The Blast of common Tongues, the Nobles Scorn,
Thy Father's Curse ; that is, the Prince's Whore.

Athen. Oh horrid Supposition ! how I detest it !
Be witness Heav'n, that sees my secret Thoughts !
Have I for this, my Lord, been taught by you
The nicest Justice, and severest Virtue,
To fear no Death, to know the End of Life,
And with a long Search discern the highest Good ?
No, *Athenais* ! when the Day beholds thee
So scandalously rais'd, Pride cast thee down,
The Scorn of Honour, and the People's Prey !
No, cruel *Leontine*, not to redeem
That aged Head from the descending Axe,
Not tho I saw thy trembling Body rack'd,
Thy Wrinkles about thee fill'd with Blood,
Would I for Empire, to the Man I love,
Be made the Object of unlawful Pleasure.

Leont. Oh greatly said ! and by the Blood which warms
(me,
Which runs as rich as any *Athens* holds,
It would improve the Virtue of the World,
If every Day a thousand Votaries,
And thousand Virgins came from far to hear thee.

Athen. Look down ye Pow'rs, take notice we obey
The rigid Principles ye have insus'd :
Yet, Oh my noble Father ! to convince you,
Since you will have it so, propose a Marriage ;

Tho

Tho with the Thought I'm cover'd o'er with Blushes,
Not that I doubt the Prince, that were to doubt
The Heavens themselves. I know he is all Truth:
But Modesty——

The Virgin's troublesome and constant Guest,
That, that alone forbids——

Leont. I wish to Heav'n
There prove no greater Bar to thy Belief:
Behold the Prince, I will retire a while,
And, when Occasion calls, come to thy aid. [*Ex. Leon.*]

Enter Varanes and Arantes.

Vara. To fix her on the Throne, to me, seems little;
Were I a God, yet would I raise her higher,
This is the Nature of thy Prince: But Oh!
As to the World thy Judgment soars above me,
And I am dar'd with this Gigantick Honour;
Glory forbids her Prospect to a Crown,
Nor must she gaze that way; my haughty Soul,
That day when she ascends the Throne of *Cyrus*,
Will leave my Body pale, and to the Stars
Retire in Blushes, lost, quite lost for ever.

Aran. What do you purpose then?

Vara. I know not what;
But see she comes, the Glory of my Arms,
The only Business of my instant Thought,
My Soul's best Joy, and all my true Repose.
I swear I cannot bear these strange Desires,
These strong Impulses, which will shortly leave me
Dead at thy Feet——

Athen. What have you found, my Lord,
In me so harsh or cruel, that you fear
Your Grievs?

Vara. First let me kneel and swear,
And on thy Hand seal my religious Vow;
Straight let the Breath of Gods blow me from Earth,
Swept from the Book of Fame, forgotten ever,
If I prefer thee not, Oh *Athenais*,
To all the *Persian* Greatness.

Athen.

The Force of Love.

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Athen. I believe you :
For I have heard you swear as much before.

Vara. Hast thou? Oh, why then did I swear again?
But that my Love knew nothing worthier of thee,
And could no better way express my Passion.

Athen. Oh rise, my Lord——

Vara. I will do every thing
Which *Athenais* bids: if there be more
In Nature to convince thee of my Love,
Whisper it, Oh some God, into my Ear;
And on her Breast thus to her listning Soul
I'll breathe the Inspiration. Wilt thou not speak?
What but one Sigh, no more! can that suffice
For all my vast Expende of Prodigal Love?
Oh *Athenais*, what shall I say or do,
To gain the thing I wish?

Athen. What's that, my Lord?

Vara. Thus to approach thee still; thus to behold thee—
Yet there is more——

Athen. My Lord, I dare not hear you.

Vara. Why dost thou frown at what thou dost not
know?

'Tis an Imagination which ne'er pierc'd thee;
Yet as 'tis ravishing, 'tis full of Honour.

Athen. I must not doubt you, Sir: But, Oh I tremble,
To think if *Isdigerdes* should behold you,
Should hear you thus protesting to a Maid
Of no degree, but Virtue, in the World——

Vara. No more of this, no more; for I disdain
All Pomp when thou art by: far be the Noise
Of Kings and Courts from us, whose gentle Souls
Our kinder Stars have steer'd another way.
Free as the Forest Birds, we'll pair together,
Without remembering who our Fathers were;
Fly to the Arbours, Grotts, and flow'ry Meads,
And in soft Murmurs interchange our Souls;
Together drink the Chrystal of the Stream,
Or taste the yellow Fruit which Autumn yields;
And when the golden Evening calls us home,
Wing to our downy Nest, and sleep till Morn.

Athen.

34 THEODOSIUS; or,

Athen. Ah Prince! no more!
 Forbear, forbear to charm me,
 Since I am doom'd to leave you, Sir, for ever.

Vara. Hold, *Athenais*—

Athen. I know your Royal Temper,
 And that high Honour reigns within your Breast,
 Which would disdain to waste so many Hours
 With one of humble Blood, compar'd to you;
 Unless strong Passion sway'd your Thoughts to love her.
 Therefore receive, O Prince! and take it kindly,
 For none on Earth but you could win it from me.
 Receive the Gift of my Eternal Love:

'Tis all I can bestow, nor is it little,
 For sure a Heart so coldly chaste as mine,
 No Charms but your's, my Lord, could e'er have warm'd.

Vara. Well have you made amends by this last Comfort,

For the cold Dart you shot at me before.
 For this last Goodness, Oh, my *Athenais*!
 (For now, methinks, I ought to call you mine!)
 I empty all my Soul in Thanks before you:
 Yet oh! one Fear remains, like Death it chills me;
 Why my relenting Love did talk of parting!

Athen. Look there, and cease your Wonder, I have sworn

T' obey my Father, and he calls me hence—

Enter Leontine.

Vara. Ha, *Leontine*? by which of all my Actions
 Have I so deeply injur'd thee, to merit
 The smartest Wound Revenge could form to end me?

Leont. Answer me now, O Prince! for Virtue
 prompts me,
 And Honesty will dally now no longer,
 What can the End of all this Passion be?
 Glory requires this strict Account, and asks
 What you intend at last to *Athenais*?

Vara. How, *Leontine*!

Leont.

The Force of Love.

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Leont. You saw her, Sir, at *Athens*; said you lov'd her.

I charg'd her humbly to receive the Honour,
And hear your Passion. Has she not, Sir, obey'd me?

Vara. She has, I thank the Gods: but whither wouldst thou?

Leont. Having resolv'd to visit *Theodosius*,
You swore you would not go without my Daughter;
Whereon I gave Command that she should follow.

Vara. Yes, *Leontine*, my old Remembrancer,
Most learn'd of all Philosophers, you did.

Leont. Thus long she has attended, you have seen her,
Sounded her Virtues and her Imperfections;
Therefore, dread Sir, forgive this bolder Charge
Which Honour sounds, and now let me demand you—

Vara. Now help, *Aranthes*, or I'm daht for ever.

Aran. Whatever happens, Sir, disdain the Marriage.

Leont. Can your high Thoughts so far forget themselves,
T'admit this humble Virgin for your Bride?

Vara. Ha!

Athen. He blushes, Gods! and stammers at the Question.

Leont. Why do you walk, and chase your self, my Lord?

The Business is not much.

Vara. How, *Leontine*!

Not much; I know that she deserves a Crown;

Yet 'tis to Reason much, tho not to Love.

And sure the World would blush to see the Daughter
Of a Philosopher on the Throne of *Cyrus*.

Athen. Undone for ever!

Leont. Is this your Answer, Sir?

Vara. Why dost thou urge me thus, and push me to
The very brink of Glory? where, alas!

I look and tremble at the vast descent:

Yet even there, to the vast bottom, down

My rash Adventurer Love would have me leap,

And grasp my *Athenais* with my Ruin.

Leont. 'Tis well, my Lord——

Vara.

36 THEODOSIUS; or,

Vara. Why dost thou thus provoke me?
I thought that *Persia's* Court had store of Honour
To satisfy the height of thy Ambition.
Besides, old Man, my Love is too well grown,
To want a Tutor for his good Behaviour;
What he will do, he will do of himself,
And not be taught by you —

Leont. I know he will not!
Fond Tears away; I know, I know he will not;
But he would buy, with his old Man's Preferment,
My Daughter for your Whore.

Vara. Away, I say, my Soul disdains the Motion!

Leont. The Motion of a Marriage; yes, I see it;
Your angry Looks and haughty Words betray it:
I found it at the first; I thank you, Sir,
You have at last rewarded your old Tutor
For all his Cares, his Watchings, Services.
Yet let me tell you, Sir, this humble Maid,
This Daughter of a poor Philosopher,
Shall, if she please, be seated on a Throne
As high as that of the immortal *Cyrus*.

Vara. I think that Age and deep Philosophy
Have crackt thy Brain: Farewel, old *Leontine*,
Retire to rest; and when this brawling Humour
Is rock'd asleep, I'll meet my *Athenais*,
And clear th' Accounts of Love, which thou hast blotted.

[Exit.]

Leont. Old *Leontine*! perhaps I 'm mad indeed.
But hold my Heart, and let that solid Virtue,
Which I so long ador'd, still keep the Reins.
O *Athenais*! But I will not chide thee;
Fate is in all our Actions, and, methinks,
At least a Father judges so; it has
Rebuk'd thee smartly for thy Easiness:
There is a kind of mournful Eloquence
In thy dumb Grief, which shames all clamorous Sorrow.

Athen. Alas! my Breast is full of Death; methinks
I fear ev'n you —

Leont. Why should'st thou fear thy Father?

Athen.

Athen. Because you have the Figure of a Man!
Is there, O speak, a possibility
To be forgiven?

Leont. Thy Father does forgive,
And Honour will; but on this hard Condition,
Never to see him more —

Athen. See him! Oh Heavens!

Leont. Unless it be, my Daughter, to upbraid him:
Not tho he should repent and strait return,
Nay proffer thee his Crown——No more of that.
Honour too cries, Revenge, revenge thy Wrongs,
Revenge thy self, revenge thy injur'd Father.
For 'tis Revenge so wise, so glorious too,
As all the World shall praise —

Athen. Oh, give me leave,
For yet I am all Tenderness; the Woman,
The weak, the mild, the fond, the coward Woman
Dares not look forth; but runs about my Breast,
And visits all the warmer Mansions there,
Where she so oft has harbour'd false *Varanes*,
Cruel *Varanes*! false forsworn *Varanes*!

Leont. Is this forgetting him? Is this the Course
Which Honour bids thee take?

Athen. Ah, Sir, allow
A little time for Love to make his way;
Hardly he won the Place, and many Sighs,
And many Tears, and thousand Oaths it cost him.
And Oh! I find he will not be dislodg'd
Without a Groan at parting hence for ever.
No, no! he vows he will not yet be rais'd
Without whole Floods of Grief at his farewell,
Which thus I sacrifice: and Oh! I swear,
Had he proved true, I would as easily
Have empty'd all my Blood, and dy'd to serve him,
As now I shed these Drops, or vent these Sighs,
To shew how well, how perfectly I lov'd him.

Leont. No Woman sure, but thou, so low in Fortune,
Therefore the nobler is thy fair Example,
Would thus have griev'd, because a Prince ador'd her;
Nor will it be believ'd in After-times,

That

38 THEODOSIUS; or,

That there was ever such a Maid in being :
Yet do I advise, preserve thy Vertue ;
And since he does disdain thee for his Bride,
Scorn thou to be——

Athen. Hold, Sir, oh ! hold, forbear.
For my nice Soul abhors the very sound ;
Yet with the shame of that, and the desire
Of an immortal Name, I am inspir'd !
All kinder Thoughts are fled for ever from me ;
All Tenderness, as if I ne'er had lov'd,
Has left my Bosom colder than the Grave.

Leont. On, *Athenais* ! on, 'tis bright before thee,
Pursue the Track, and thou shalt be a Star.

Athen. Oh *Leontine*, I swear, my noble Father,
That I will starve ere once forego my Virtue :
And thus let's join to contradict the World,
That Empire could not tempt a poor old Man,
To sell his Prince the Honour of his Daughter ;
And she too match'd the Spirit of her Father ;
Tho humbly born, and yet more humbly bred,
She for her Fame refus'd a Royal Bed ;
Who, tho she lov'd, yet did put off the Hour,
Nor could her Virtue be betray'd by Pow'r.

“ Patterns like these will guilty Courts improve,
“ And teach the Fair to blush at conscious Love :

“ Then let all Maids for Honour come in view,

“ If any Maid can more for Glory do. [Exeunt.



A C T



ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter Varanes and Aranthes.

Vara.  Ome to my Arms, my faithful, deat
Aranthes,
Soft Counsellor, Companion of my
Youth ;

If I had longer been alone, most sure,
With the Distraction that surrounds my Heart,
My Hand would have rebell'd against his Master,
And done a Murder here.

Aranth. The Gods forbid.

Vara. I swear, I press thee with as hearty Joy,
As ever fearful Bride embrac'd her Man,
When from a Dream of Death she wak'd, and found
Her Lover safe, and sleeping by her side.

Aranth. The Cause, my Lord ?

Vara. Early thou know'st last Night I went to rest ;
But long, my Friend, ere Slumber clos'd my Eyes ;
Long was the Combat fought, 'twixt Love and Glory ;
The Fever of my Passion burnt me up,
My Pangs grew stronger, and my Rack was doubled ;
My Bed was all a-float with the cold Drops,
That mortal Pain wrang from my lab'ring Limbs ;
My Groans more deep than others dying Gasps :
Therefore, I charge thee, haste to her Apartment ;
I do conjure thee tell her, tell her all
My Fears can urge, or Fondness can invent :
Tell her how I repent, say any thing ;
For any thing I'll do to quench my Fires :
Say, I will marry her now on the instant :
Say all that I would say ; yet in the end
My Love shall make it more than Gods can utter.

40 THEODOSIUS; or,

Aranth. My Lord, both *Leontine* and she are gone
From their Apartment —

Vara. Ha! gone, say'st thou! whither?

Aranth. That was my whole Employment all this Day:
But, Sir, I grieve to speak it, they have left
No track behind for Care to find 'em out;
Nor is it possible —

Vara. It is, it shall;
I'll struggle with Impossibilities,
To find my *Athenais*: Not the Walls
Of *Athens*, nor of *Thebes*, shall hide her from me.
I'll bring the Force of all my Father's Arms,
And lay 'em waste, but I'll redeem my Love.
Oh, *Leontine*! morose old *Leontine*,
Thou mere Philosopher! Oh, cruel Sage,
Who for one hasty Word, one cholerick Doubt,
Has turn'd the Scale; tho' in the sacred Balance
My Life, my Glory, and my Empire hung.

Aranth. Most sure, my Lord, they are retir'd to *Athens*,
I will send Post to Night. —

Vara. No, no, *Aranthes*,
Prepare my Chariots, for I'll go in Person;
I swear till now, till I began to fear
Some other might enjoy my *Athenais*,
I swear, I did not know how much I lov'd her.
But let's away, I'll to the Emperor,
Thou to the hasty Management of my Business;
Prepare, to Day I'll go, to Day I'll find her:
No more; I'll take my leave of *Theodosius*,
And meet thee on the *Hippodrome*: away,
Let the wild Hurry of thy Master's Love
Make quick thy Apprehension: haste, and leave me.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE

The Force of Love.

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SCENE II.

*Pulcheria, Atticus, Leontine, Votaries leading Athenais
in Procession after her Baptism, to be confirm'd.*

Atticus Sings.

*Oh, Chrysoſtom ! look down, and ſee
An Off'ring worthy Heav'n and thee !
So rich the Victim, bright and fair,
That ſhe on Earth appears a Star.*

*Chor. Eudofia is the Virgin's Name,
And After-times ſhall ſing her Fame.*

*Atticus Lead her, Votaries, lead her in,
Sings. Her holy Birth does now begin.*

*1 Votary. In humble Weeds, but clean Array,
Your Hours ſhall ſweetly paſs away;
And when the Rites Divine are paſt,
To pleaſant Gardens you ſhall haſte ;*

*2 Votary. Where many a flow'ry Bed we have,
That emblem ſtill to each a Grave :
And when within the Stream we look,
With Tears we uſe to ſwell the Brook :
But Oh, when in the liquid Glaſs
Our Heav'n appears, we ſigh to paſs !*

*Chor. For Heav'n alone we are deſign'd,
And all things bring our Heav'n to mind.*

*Athen. O Princeſs ! O moſt worthy of the World,
That is ſubmitted by its Emperor [Kneels.
To your moſt wiſe and providential Sway :
What Greek or Roman Eloquence can paint
The Rapture and Devotion of my Soul !
I am adopted yours ; you are my Goddeſs,
That have new-form'd, new-moulded my Conceptions,
And by the Plat-form of a Work Divine,
New fram'd, new built me to your own Deſires ;
Thrown all the Lumber of my Paſſions out,*

42 THEODOSIUS; or,

And made my Heart a Mansion of Perfection;
Clean as an Anchorite's Grot, or Votary's Cell,
And spoileless as the Glories of his Steps,
Whom we far off adore!

Pulch. Rise, *Eudofia*,

And let me fold my Christian in my Arms;
With this dear Pledge of an Eternal Love,
I seal thee, O *Eudofia*! mine for ever.
Accept, blest Charge, the Vows of my Affection;
For by the sacred Friendship that I give thee,
I think that Heav'n by Miracle did send thee,
To ease my Cares, to help me in my Councils,
To be my Sister, Partner in my Bed;
And equally, thro' my whole Course of Life,
To be the better part of thy *Pulcheria*,
And share my Griefs and Joys.

Athen. No, Madam, no;

Excuse the Cares that this sad Wretch must bring you;
Oh, rather let me leave the World for ever;
Or if I must partake your Royal Secrets,
If you resolve to load me with such Honour,
Let it be far from Cities, far from Courts,
Where I may fly all human Conversation;
Where I may never see, nor hear, nor name,
Nor think, nor dream, O Heav'n! if possible,
Of Mankind more.

Pulch. What now, in Tears, *Eudofia*?

Athen. Far from the Guilt of Palaces, oh send me!
Drive me, oh drive me from the Traitor Man!
So I might 'scape that Monster, let me dwell
In Lions Haunts, or in some Tyger's Den;
Place me on some steep, craggy, ruin'd Rock,
That bellies out, just dropping in the Ocean;
Bury me in the hollow of its Womb,
Where starving on my cold and flinty Bed,
I may from far, with giddy Apprehension,
See infinite Fathoms down the rumbling Deep.
Yet not ev'n there, in that vast whirl of Death,
Can there be found so terrible a Ruin
As Man, false Man, smiling destructive Man.

Pulch.

The Force of Love.

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Pulch. Then thou hast lov'd, *Eudofia*, Oh, my Sister!
Still nearer to my Heart, so much the dearer;
Because our Fates are like, and hand in hand
Our Fortunes lead us thro' the Maze of Life:
I am glad that thou hast lov'd; nay, lov'd with Danger;
Since thou hast 'scap'd the Ruin—Methinks it lightens
The weight of my Calamities, that thou
(In all things else so perfect and divine)
Art yet a-kin to my Infirmary,
And bear'st thy part in Love's melodious Ill:
Love that like Bane perfum'd infects the Mind,
That sad Delight that charms all Woman-kind.

Athen. Yes, Madam, I confess, that Love has charm'd
me,

But never shall again. No, I renounce him;
Inspire me all the Wrongs of abus'd Women,
All you that have been cozen'd by false Men;
See what a strict Example I will make:
But for the Perjuries of one I will revenge ye
For all that's past, that's present, and to come.

Pulch. Oh, thou far more than the most masculine
Virtue!

Where, our *Astrea*; where, oh drowning Brightness,
Where hast thou been so long? Let me again
Protest my Admiration and my Love;
Let me declare aloud, while thou art here,
While such clear Virtue shines within our Circle,
Vice shall no more appear within the Palace,
But hide her dazzled Eyes, and this be call'd
The holy Court: but lo, the Emperor comes.

Enter Theodosius, and Attendants.

Beauty, like thine, may drive that Form away,
That has so long entranc'd his Soul——My Lord——

Theod. If yer, alas! I might but hope to see her;
But, Oh! forgive me Heav'n, this wilder start,
That thus would reach Impossibility:
No, no, I never must behold her more;

As

44 THEODOSIUS; or,

As well my *Atticus* might raise the Dead,
As *Leontine* should charm that Form in view.

Pulch. My Lord, I come to give your Grief a Cure,
With purer Flames to draw that cruel Fire
That tortur'd you so long—Behold this Virgin—
The Daughter of your Tutor *Leontine*.

Theo. Ha!

Pulch. She is your Sister's Charge, and made a Chris-
(rian;

And *Athenais* is *Eudisia* now;
Be sure a fairer never grac'd Religion,
And for her Virtue she transcends Example.

Theo. O all ye Blest above! how can this be?
Am I awake, or is this possible? [*Athen. kneels.*

Pulch. She kneels, my Lord, will you not go and
raise her?

Theo. Nay, do thou raise her, for I am rooted here!
Yet if laborious Love and Melancholy
Have not o'ercome me, and quite turn'd me mad,
It must be she, that naked dazzling Sweetness;
The very Figure of that Morning Star,
That dropping Pearls, and shedding dewy Beams,
Fled from the greedy Waves when I approach'd.
Answer me, *Leontine*, am I distracted?
Or is this true? By thee in all Encounters
I will be rul'd, in Temperance and Wildness,
When Reason clashes with Extravagance:
But speak——

Leon. 'Tis true, my Lord, this is my Daughter,
Whom I conceal'd in *Persia* from all Eyes
But your's, when Chance directed you that way.

Theo. He says, 'tis true: Why then this heartless
Carriage?

Oh, were I proof against the Darts of Love,
And cold to Beauty as the Marble Lover
That lies without a Thought upon his Tomb;
Would not this glorious Dawn of Life run thro' me,
And waken Death it self?——Why am I slow then?
What hinders now, but that in spite of Rules

The Force of Love.

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I burst thro' all the bands of Death that hold me, [He
And fly with such a haste to that Appearance, kneels.
As bury'd Saints shall make at the last Summons?

Athen. The Emperor at my Feet! O Sir! forgive me,
Drown me not thus with everlasting Shame;
Both Heav'n and Earth must blush at such a view:
Nor can I bear it longer——

Leon. My Lord, she is unworthy——

Theo. Ha! what say'st thou *Leontine*?

Unworthy! O thou Atheist to perfection!
All that the blooming Earth could send forth fair;
All that the gaudy Heav'ns could drop down glorious!
Unworthy say'st thou! Wert thou not her Father,
I swear I would revenge.——But haste, and tell me,
For Love like mine will bear no second Thought,
Can all the Honours of the Orient,
Thus sacrific'd with the most pure Affection,
With spotless Thoughts and languishing Desires,
Obtain, O *Leontine*, (the Crown at last)
To thee I speak, thy Daughter to my Bride?

Leont. My Lord, the Honour bears such Estimation,
It calls the Blood into my aged Cheeks,
And quite o'erwhelms my Daughter with Confusion;
Who with her Body prostrate on the Earth
Ought to adore you for the proffer'd Glory.

Theo. Let me embrace, and thank thee: O kind
Heav'n!

O *Atticus*! *Pulcheria*! O my Father!
Was ever Change like mine? Run thro' the Streets;
Who waits there? Run, and loud as Fame can speak,
With Trumpet Sounds proclaim your Emperor's Joy.
And as of old, on the great Festival
Of her they call the Mother of the Gods;
Let all Work cease, at least an oaken Garland
Crown each *Plebeian* Head: Let sprightly Bowls
Be deal'd about, and the toss'd Cymbals sound:
Tell 'em their much lamented *Theodosius*
By Miracle is brought from Death to Life;
His Melancholy's gone, and now once more
He shall appear at the State's Helm again;

Nor

Nor fear a Wreck while this bright Star directs us;
 For while she shines, no Sands, no cowering Rocks
 Shall lie unseen, but I will cut my way
 Secure as *Neptune* thro' the highest Stream,
 And to the Port in safety steer the World.

Athen. Alas, my Lord, consider my Extraction,
 With all my other Wants——

Theo. Peace, Empress, Peace!
 No more the Daughter of old *Leontine*;
 A Christian now, and Partner of the East.

Athen. My Father has dispos'd me, you command me;
 What can I answer then but my Obedience?

Theo. Attend her, dear *Pulcheria*; and, oh tell her,
 To Morrow, if she please, I will be happy: [*Ex. Pulch.*
 O why so long should I my Joys delay? and *Athen.*
 Time imp thy Wings, let not thy Minutes stay,
 But to a Moment change the tedious Day.
 The Day! 'twill be an Age before to Morrow:
 An Age, a Death, a vast Eternity,
 Where we shall cold, and past Enjoyment lie.

Enter Varanes and Arantes.

Vara. O, *Theodosius*!

Theo. Ha! my Brother here!
 What dost thou come to make my Bliss run o'er?
 Why is there more to wish? Fortune can find
 No Flaw in such a Glut of Happiness,
 To let one Misery in——O, my *Varanes*!
 Thou that of late didst seem to walk on Clouds,
 Now give a loose, let go the slackned Reins,
 Let us drive down the Precipice of Joy,
 As if that all the Winds of Heav'n were for us.

Vara. My Lord, I'm glad to find the Gale is turn'd,
 And give you Joy of this auspicious Fortune.
 Plough on your way, with all your Streamers out;
 With all your glorious Flags and Streamers ride
 Triumphant on——And leave me to the Waves,
 The Sands, the Winds, the Rocks, the sure Destruction
 And ready Gulphs that gape to swallow me.

Theo.

The Force of Love.

47

Theo. It was thy Hand that drew me from the Grave,
Who had been dead by this time to Ambition,
To Crowns, to Titles, and my slighted Greatness.
But still as if each Work of thine deserv'd
The smile of Heav'n——Thy *Theodosius* met
With something dearer than his Diadem,
With all that's worth a Wish, that's worth a Life;
I met with that which made me leave the World.

Vara. And I, O turn of Chance! O cursed Fortune!
Have lost at once all that could make me happy.
O ye too partial Powers! But now no more:
The Gods, my dear, my most lov'd *Theodosius*,
Double all those Joys that thou hast met upon thee;
For sure thou art most worthy, worthy more
Than *Jove* in all his Prodigality
Can e'er bestow in Blessings on Mankind!
And Oh, methinks my Soul is strangely mov'd,
Takes it the more unkindly of her Stars,
That thou and I cannot be blest together:
For I must leave thee, Friend! this Night must leave
thee,

To go in doubtful Search of what perhaps
I ne'er shall find; if so my cruel Fate
Has order'd it: Why then farewell for ever,
For I shall never, never see thee more.

Theo. How sensible my tender Soul is grown
Of what you utter! O my gallant Friend!
O Brother! O *Varanes*! Do not judge
By what I speak, for Sighs will interrupt me;
Judge by my Tears, judge by these strict Embraces,
And by my last Resolve: Tho I have met
With what in silence I so long ador'd;
Tho in the Rapture of protesting Joys,
I had set down to Morrow for my Nuptials;
And *Atticus* to Night prepares the Temple;
Yet my *Varanes*, I will rob my Soul
Of all her Health, of my Imperial Bride,
And wander with thee in the search of that
On which thy Life depends——

Vara.

48 THEODOSIUS; or,

Vara. If this I suffer,
Conclude me then begotten of a Hind,
And bred in Wilds: No, *Theodosius*, no;
I charge thee by our Friendship, and conjure thee
By all the Gods, to mention this no more:
Perhaps, dear Friend, I shall be sooner here
Than you expect, or I my self imagine:
What most I grieve, is that I cannot wait
To see your Nuptials: Yet my Soul is with you,
And all my adorations to your Bride.

Theo. What, my *Varanes*, will you be so cruel
As not to see my Bride before you go?
Or are you angry at your Rival's Charms,
Who has already ravish'd half my Heart,
That once was all your own?

Vara. You know I am disorder'd!
My Melancholy will not suit her blest Condition.

[Exit Theo.]

And the Gods know, since thou, my *Athenais*,
Are fled from these sick Eyes, all other Women
To my pall'd Soul seem like the Ghost of Beauty,
And haunt my Memory with the loss of thee.

Enter Athenais, Theodosius leading her.

Theo. Behold, my Lord, the occasion of my Joy.

Vara. O ye immortal Gods! *Aranthes*! Oh!
Look there, and wonder! Ha! is't possible?

Athen. My Lord, the Emperor says you are his Friend,
He charges me to use my Interest,
And beg of you to stay, at least so long
As our Espousals will be solemnizing.
I told him I was honour'd once to know you;
But that so slightly, as I could not warrant
The Grant of any thing I should ask you——

Vara. O Heaven and Earth! O *Athenais*! why,
Why dost thou use me thus? Had I the World,
Thou know'st it should be thine.

Athen. I know not that——
But yet, to make sure Work, one half of it

Is mine already, Sir, without your giving.
 My Lord, the Prince is obstinate, his Glory
 Scorns to be mov'd by the weak Breath of Woman;
 He is all Hero, bent for higher Game;
 Therefore, 'tis noble, Sir, to let him go:
 If not for him, my Lord, yet for my self,
 I must intreat the Favour to retire. [*Ex. Athen. &c.*
Vara. Death! and Despair! Confusion! Hell and Fu-
 ries!

Theo. Heav'n-guard thy Health, and still preserve thy
 What should this mean? I fear the Consequence (Virtue:
 For 'tis too plain they know each other well.

Vara. Undone! *Aranthes!* lost, undone for ever,
 I see my Doom, I read it with broad Eyes,
 As plain as if I saw the Book of Fate:
 Yet I will muster all my Spirits up,
 Digest my Griefs, swallow the rising Passions.
 Yes, I will stand this Shock of all the Gods
 Well as I can, and struggle for my Life.

Theo. You muse, my Lord: and if you'll give me leave
 To judge your Thoughts, they seem employ'd at present
 About my Bride: I guess you know her too.

Vara. His Bride! O Gods, give me a Moment's Patience.
 I must confess the sight of *Athenais*,
 Where I so little did expect to see her,
 So grac'd and so adorn'd, did raise my wonder;
 But what exceeds all Admiration, is
 That you should talk of making her your Bride;
 'Tis such a blind Effect of monstrous Fortune,
 That tho I will remember you affirm'd it,
 I cannot yet believe——

Theo. Then now believe me:
 By all the Pow'rs Divine, I will espouse her.

Vara. Ha! I shall leap the Bounds. Come, come, my
 Lord;

By all these Pow'rs you nam'd, I say you must not.

Theo. I say, I will; and who shall bar my Pleasure?
 Yet more, I speak the Judgment of my Soul,
 Weigh but with Fortune Merit in the Ballance,
 And *Athenais* loses by the Marriage.

50 THEODOSIUS; or,

Vara. Relentless Fates! malicious cruel Pow'rs!
O for what Crime do you thus rack your Creature?
Sir, I must tell you this unkindly meanness
Suits the Profession of an Anchorite well,
But in an Oriental Emperor
It gives Offence; nor can you without Scandal,
Without the Notion of a grovelling Spirit,
Espouse the Daughter of old *Leontine*,
Whose utmost Glory is to have been my Tutor.

Theo. He has so well acquitted that Employment,
Breeding you up to such a gallant Height
Of full Perfection, and Imperial Greatness,
That ev'n for this Respect, if for no other,
I will esteem him worthy while I live.

Vara. My Lord, you'll pardon me a little Freedom?
For I must boldly urge in such a Cause,
Who over flatters you, tho ne'er so near
Related to your Blood, should be suspected.

Theo. If Friendship would admit a cold Suspicion,
After what I have heard, and seen to Day,
Of all Mankind I should suspect *Varanes*.

Vara. He has stung me to the Heart; my Groans will
Unless my struggling Passion gets a vent. (choke me,
Out with it then ——— I can no more dissemble——
Yes, yes, my Lord, since you reduce me to
The last necessity, I must confess it;
I must avow my Flame for *Athenais*.
I am all Fire; my Passion eats me up,
It grows incorporate with my Flesh and Blood:
My Pangs redouble, now they cleave my Heart!
O *Athenais*! O *Eudisia*——oh——

Tho plain as Day I see my own Destruction,
Yet to my Death, and oh, let all the Gods
Bear Witness! I swear I will adore thee.

Theo. Alas! *Varanes*. Which of us two the Heav'n's
Have mark'd for Death is yet above the Stars;
But while we live let us preserve our Friendship
Sacred and just, as we have ever done.
This only Mean in two such hard Extremes
Remains for both: To morrow you shall see her,

With

The Force of Love.

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With all Advantage, in her own Apartment;
Take your own time, say all you can to gain her:
If you can win her, lead her into *Persia*;
If not, consent that I espouse her here.

Vara. Still worse and worse! O *Theodosius*! oh!
I cannot speak for Sighs, my Death is seal'd
By this last sweetness; had you been less good,
I might have hop'd: but now my Doom's at hand.
Go then, and take her, take her to the Temple:
The Gods too give you Joy. O *Athenais*!
Why does thy Image mock my foolish Sorrow?
O *Theodosius*, do not see my Tears:
Away, and leave me; leave me to the Grave.

Theo. Farewel; let's leave the Issue to the Heav'ns.
I will prepare your way with all that Honour
Can urge in your behalf, tho to my Ruin. [Ex. Theo.]

Vara. O could I tear my Limbs, and eat my Flesh;
Fool that I was, fond, proud, vain-glorious Fool!
Damn'd be all Courts, and treble damn'd Ambition
Blasted be thy Remembrance. Curses on thee,
And Plagues on Plagues fall on those Fools that seek thee.

Aranth. Have Comfort, Sir——

Vara. Away, and leave me, Villain;
Traitor, who wrought me first to my Destruction——
Yet stay and help me, help me to curse my Pride,
Help me to wish that I had ne'er been Royal,
That I had never heard the Name of *Cyrus*,
That my first Brawl in Court had been my last.
O that I had been born some happy Swain,
And never known a Life so great, so vain!
Where I Extremes might not be forc'd to choose,
And blest with some mean Wife, no Crown could lose;
Where the dear Partner of my little State,
With all her smiling Off-spring at the Gate,
Blessing my Labours, might my coming wait:
Where in our humble Beds all safe might lie,
And not in cursed Courts for Glory die—— [Exeunt.]

SONG.

1.

HAIL to the Mirtle Shade,
 All hail to the Nymphs of the Fields;
 Kings would not here invade
 Those Pleasures that Virtue yields,

Chor. Beauty here opens her Arms,
 To soften the languishing Mind;
 And Phillis unlocks her Charms;
 Ah Phillis! ah why so kind?

2.

Phillis, thou Soul of Love,
 Thou Joy of the neighb'ring Swains;
 Phillis that crowns the Grove,
 And Phillis that gilds the Plains.

Chor. Phillis, that ne'er had the Skill,
 To paint, to patch, and be fine,
 Yet Phillis whose Eyes can kill,
 Whom Nature hath made Divine.

3.

Phillis, whose charming Song
 Makes Labour and Pains a delight;
 Phillis that makes the Day young,
 And shortens the live-long Night.

Chor. Phillis, whose Lips like May,
 Still laughs at the Sweets they bring;
 Where Love never knows decay,
 But sets wish Eternal Spring.

A C T

*****!*****

A C T IV. S C E N E II.

Enter Marcian, and Lucius at a distance.

Marc.



HE General of the Oriental Armies,
Was a Commission large as Fate could
give.

'Tis gone: why what care I? O For-
tune, Fortune!

Thou laughing Empress of this busy World,

Marcian defies thee now——

Why what a thing is a discarded Favourite?

He who but now tho longing to retire,

Cou'd not for busy Waiters be alone,

Throng'd in his Chamber, haunted to his Closet,

With a full Croud, and an eternal Court;

When once the Favour of his Prince is turn'd;

Shun'd as a Ghost, the clouded Man appears,

And all the gaudy Worshippers forsake him:

So fares it now with me where e'er I come,

Is if I were another *Catiline*.

The Courtiers rise, and no Man will sit near me,

As if the Plague were on me all Men fly me:

O *Lucius*! *Lucius*! if thou leav'st me too,

I think, I think I cou'd not bear it;

But, like a Slave, my Spirit broke with Suffering,

Should on these Coward Knees fall down and beg

Once to be great again——

Luc. Forbid it, Heav'n!

That e'er the noble *Marcian* condescend

To ask of any, but the immortal Gods.

Nay, I avow, if yet your Spirit dare,

Spite of the Court you shall be great as *Cesar*.

Marc. No, *Lucius*, no; the Gods repel that humour.

Yet since we are alone, and must ere long

Leave this bad Court; let us, like Veterans,

E 3

Speak

54 THEODOSIUS; or,

Speak out—Thou say'st, alas! as great as *Cæsar*;
But where's his Greatness? Where is his Ambition?
If any Sparks of Virtue yet remain
In this poor Figure of the *Roman* Glory:
I say, if any be, how dim they shine,
Compar'd with what his great Fore-Fathers were?
How should he lighten then, or awe the World,
Whose Soul in Courts is but a lambent Fire;
And scarce, O *Rome*! a Glow-worm in the Field?
Soft, Young, Religious, God-like Qualities
For one that should recover the lost Empire!
And wade thro' Seas of Blood, and walk o'er Mountains
Of slaughter'd Bodies to immortal Honour.

Luc. Poor Heart! He pin'd a while ago for Love.

Marc. And for his Mistress vow'd to leave the World,
But some new Chance it seems has chang'd his Mind.
A Marriage! but to whom or whence she came,
None knows: but yet a Marriage is proclaim'd,
Pageants prepar'd, the Arches are adorn'd;
The Statues crown'd; the *Hippodrome* does groan
Beneath the Burden of the mounted Warriors;
The Theatre is open'd too, where he
And the hot *Persian* meant to act their Follies.
Gods! Gods! Is this the Image of our *Cæsars*?
Is this the Model of our *Romulus*?
O why so poorly have you stamp'd *Rome's* Glory:
Not *Rome's* but your's! Is this Man fit to bear it?
This waxen Portraiture of Majesty!
Which every warmer Passion does melt down,
And makes him fonder than a Woman's longing!

Luc. Thus much I know to the eternal Shame
Of the Imperial Blood; this upstart Empress,
This fine new Queen is sprung from abject Parents;
Nay, basely born! but that's all one to him,
He likes and loves, and therefore marries her.

Marc. Shall I not speak? Shall I not tell him of it?
I feel this big-swol'n throbbing *Roman* Spirit
Will burst, unless I utter what I ought.

Enter

The Force of Love.

55

Enter Pulcheria with a Paper in her Hand, and Julia.

Marc. *Pulcheria* here! why she's the Scourge of *Marcian*;
I tremble too when ever she approaches;
And my Heart dances an unusual Measure:
Spite of my self I blush and cannot stir,
While she is here——What, *Lucius*, can this mean?
'Tis said *Calphurnia* had the Heart of *Cesar*;
Augustus doted on the subtle *Livia*:
Why then should I not worship that fair Angel?
Oh didst thou mark her when her Fury lightned;
She seem'd all Goddess; nay, her Frowns became her:
There was a Beauty in her very Wildness.
Were I a Man born great as our first Founder,
Sprung from the Blood Divine——But I am cast
Beyond all possibility of Hope——

Pulch. Come hither, *Marcian*! read this Paper o'er,
And mark the strange neglect of *Theodosius*:
He signs whate'er I bring; perhaps you have heard
To morrow he intends to wed a Maid of *Athens*,
New-made a Christian, and new-nam'd *Eudisia*;
Whom he more dearly prizes than his Empire:
Yet in this Paper he hath set his Hand,
And seal'd it too with the Imperial Signet,
That she should lose her Head to morrow Morning.

Marc. 'Tis not for me to judge; yet this seems strange——

Pulch. I know he rather would commit a Murder
On his own Person, than permit a Vein
Of her to bleed; yet, *Marcian*, what might follow,
If I were envious of this Virgin's Honour,
By this rash passing whatsoe'er I offer——
Without a view——ha, but I had forgot!
Julia, let's haste from this infectious Person——
I had forgot that *Marcian* was a Traitor:
Yer by the Pow'r's Divine, I swear 'tis pity,
That one so form'd by Nature for all Honour,
All Titles, Greatness, Dignities Imperial,
The noblest Person, and the bravest Courage,
Should not be honest: *Julia*, is't not pity?

56 THEODOSIUS; or,

O *Marcian*! *Marcian*! I could weep to think
Virtue should lose it self as thine has done.
Repent, rash Man, if yet 'tis not too late,
And mend thy Errors; so farewell for ever.

[*Ex. Pulch. and Jul.*]

Marc. Farewel for ever! no, Madam, ere I go,
I am resolv'd to speak, and you shall hear me:
Then, if you please take off this Traitor's Head;
End my Commission and my Life together.

Luc. Perhaps you'll laugh at what I'm going to say;
But by your Life, my Lord, I think 'tis true:
Pulcheria loves this Traitor! Did you mark her?
At first she had forgot your Banishment;
Makes you her Counsellor, and tells her Secrets,
As to a Friend; nay, leaves them in your Hand,
And says, 'tis pity that you are not honest,
With such Description of your Gallantry,
As none but Love could make: Then taking leave,
Thro' the dark Lashes of her darting Eyes,
Methought she shot her Soul at every Glance;
Still looking back, as if she had a mind
That you should know she left her Heart behind her.

Marc. Alas! thou didst not know her, nor do I:
Nor can the Wit of all Mankind conceive her.
But let's away. This Paper is of use.

Luc. I guess your purpose;
He is a Boy, and as a Boy you'll use him:
There is no other way.

Marc. Yes, if he be not
Quite dead with Sleep, for ever lost to Honour,
Marcian with this shall rouse him. O, my *Lucius*!
Methinks the Ghosts of the Great *Theodosius*,
And thundering *Constantine* appear before me:
They charge me as a Soldier to chastize him,
To lash him with keen Words from lazy Love,
And shew him how they trod the Paths of Honour.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE

The Force of Love.

57

SCENE II.

Theodosius lying on a Couch, with two Boys dress'd like Cupids singing to him as he sleeps.

SONG.

*Happy Day! ah happy Day,
That Cæsar's Beams did first display,
So peaceful was the happy Day.
The Gods themselves did all look down,
The Royal Infant's Birth to crown,
So pleas'd, they scarce did on the Guilty frown.*

*Happy Day! ah happy Day!
And oh thrice happy Hour,
That made such Goodness Master of such Pow'r,
For thus the Gods declare to Men,
No Day like this shall ever come agen.*

Enter Marcian with an Order.

Theo. Ha! what rash thing art thou, who set'st so
A value on thy Life, thus to presume (small
Against the fatal Orders I have given,
Thus to entrench on Cæsar's solitude,
And urge me to thy Ruin?

Marc. Mighty Cæsar,
I have transgress'd, and for my Pardon bow
To thee, as to the Gods when I offend:
Nor can I doubt your Mercy, when you know
The Nature of my Crime. I am commission'd
From all the Earth to give thee Thanks and Praises,
Thou darling of Mankind! whose conqu'ring Arms
Already drown the Glory of great *Julius*,
Whose deeper reach in Laws and Policy,
Makes wise *Augustus* envy thee in Heav'n.
What mean the Fates by such prodigious Virtue?
When scarce the manly Down yet shades thy F

58 THEODOSIUS; or,

With Conquests thus to over-run the World,
And make Barbarians tremble? O, ye Gods!
Should Destiny now end thee in the Bloom,
Methinks I see thee mourn'd above the loss
Of lov'd *Germanicus*; thy Funerals,
Like his, are solemniz'd with Tears and Blood.

Theo. How, *Marcian*?

Marc. Yes, the raging Multitude,
Like Torrents, set no bound to their mad Grief;
Shave their Wives Heads, and tear off their own Hair;
With wild Despair they bring their Infants out,
To brawl their Parents sorrow in the Streets;
Trade is no more, all Courts of Justice stop;
With Stones they dash the Windows of their Temples,
Pull down their Altars; break their Household-Gods;
And still the universal Groan is this,
Constantinople's lost, our Empire's ruin'd:
Since he is gone, that Father of his Country.
Since he is dead, O Life, where is thy Pleasure?
O *Rome*! Oh conquer'd World, where is thy Glory?

Theo. I know thee well, thy Custom and thy Manners;
Thou dost upbraid me: but no more of this,
Not for thy Life——

Marc. What's Life without my Honour?
Could you transform your self into a Gorgon,
Or make that beardless Face like *Jupiter's*,
I would be heard in spite of all your Thunder:
O pow'r of Guilt, you fear to stand the Test,
Which Virtue brings; like Sores your Vices shake.
Before this *Roman* Healer. But, by the Gods,
Before I go I'll rip the Malady,
And let the Venom flow before your Eyes.
This is a Debt to the Great *Theodosius*,
The Grand-father of your illustrious Blood;
And then farewell for ever.

Theo. Presuming *Marcian*!
What canst thou urge against my Innocence?
The whole Course of all my harmless Youth,
Hour, I cannot call to mind
At which I have done to shame me.

Marc.

The Force of Love.

59

Marc. This may be true : yet if you give the sway
To other Hands, and your poor Subjects suffer,
Your Negligence to them is as the Cause.

O Theodosius credit me, who know
The World, and hear how Soldiers censure Kings;
In after-times, if thus you should go on,
Your Memory by Warriors will be scorn'd,
As much as *Nero* or *Caligula* loath'd ;
They will despise your sloth, and backward ease,
More than they hate the others Cruelty.
And what a thing, ye Gods, is scorn or pity ?
Heap on me, Heav'n, the hate of all Mankind ;
Load me with Malice, Envy, Detestation :
Let me be horrid to all apprehension,
And the World shun me, so I escape but Scorn.

Theo. Prithee, no more.

Marc. Nay, when the Legions make Comparisons,
And say, thus cruel *Nero* once resolved
On *Galba's* Insurrection, for Revenge,
To give all *France* as Plunder to the Army ;
To poison the whole Senate at a Feast ;
To burn the City, turn the wild Beasts out,
Bears, Lions, Tigers, on the Multitude ;
That so obstructing those that quench'd the Fire,
He might at-once destroy rebellious *Rome*.

Theo. O cruelty ! why tell'st thou me of this ?
Am I of such a barbarous bloody Temper ?

Marc. Yet some will say, this shew'd he had a Spirit,
However fierce, avenging, and pernicious,
That favour'd of a *Roman* ; but for you,
What can your partial Sycophants invent,
To make you room among the Emperors ?
Whose utmost is the smallest part of *Nero* ;
A pretty Player, one that can act a Hero,
And never be one. O ye immortal Gods,
Is this the old *Cæsarian* Majesty ?
Now, in the name of our great *Romulus*,
Why sing you not, and fiddle too as he did ?
Why have you not, like *Nero*, a *Phenascus* ?
One to take care of your celestial Voice ?

Lie

60 THEODOSIUS; or,

Lie on your Back, my Lord, and on your Stomach
Lay a thin Plate of Lead, abstain from Fruits;
And when the Business of the Stage is done,
Retire with your loose Friends to costly Banquets,
While the lean Army groans upon the Ground.

Theo. Leave me, I say, least I chastise thee:
Hence, be gone, I say——

Marc. Not till you have heard me out——
Build too, like him, a Palace lin'd with Gold,
As long and large as that of th' Esquiline:
Inclose a Pool too in it, like the Sea,
And at the Empire's Cost let Navies meet:
Adorn your starry Chambers too with Gems,
Contrive the plated Cielings to turn round,
With Pipes to cast Ambrosian Oils upon you:
Consume with his prodigious Vanity,
In mere Perfumes and odorous Distillations,
Of Sesterces at once four hundred Millions:
Let naked Virgins wait you at your Table,
And wanton Cupids dance and clap their Wings.
No matter what becomes of the poor Soldiers,
So they perform the Drudgery they are fit for;
Why, let 'em starve for want of their Arrears,
Drop as they go, and lie like Dogs in Ditches.

Theo. Come, you are a Traitor!

Marc. Go to, you are a Boy——
Or by the Gods——

Theo. If Arrogance, like this,
And to the Emperor's Face, should 'scape unpunish'd,
I'll write my self a Coward; die then Villain,
A Death too glorious for so bad a Man,
By *Theodosius*' Hand.

[*Marcian disarms him,*
[*but is wounded.*

Marc. Now, Sir, where are you?
What, in the name of all our Roman Spirits,
Now charms my Hand from giving thee thy Fate?
Has he not cut me off from all my Honours?
Torn my Commissions, sham'd me to the Earth,
Banish'd the Court, a Vagabond for ever?
Does not the Soldier hourly ask it from me?

Sigh

Sigh their own Wrongs, and beg me to revenge 'em?
 What hinders now, but that I mount the Throne,
 And make beside this purple Youth my Footstool?
 The Armies court me, and my Country's Cause;
 The Injuries of *Rome* and *Greece* persuade me.
 Shew but this *Roman* Blood which he has drawn,
 They'll make me Emp'ror whether I will or no.
 Did not for less than this the latter *Brutus*,
 Because he thought *Rome* wrong'd, in Person head
 Against his Friend a black Conspiracy,
 And stab the Majesty of all the World?

Theo. Act as you please, I am within your Power,

Marc. Did not the former *Brutus*, for the Crime
 Of *Sextus*, drive old *Tarquin* from his Kingdom?
 And shall this Prince too, by permitting others
 To act their wicked Wills and lawless Pleasures,
 Ravish from the Empire its dear Health,
 Well-being, Happiness, and antient Glory?
 Go on in this dishonourable Rest?

Shall he, I say, dream on, while the starv'd Troops
 Lie cold and waking in the Winter Camp;
 And like pin'd Birds, for want of sustenance,
 Feed on the Haws and Berries of the Fields?
 O temper, temper me, ye gracious Gods;
 Give to my Hand forbearance, to my Heart
 Its constant Loyalty: I would but shake him,
 Rouze him a little from this Death of Honour,
 And shew him what he should be.

Theo. You accuse me,

As if I were some Monster, most unheard of:
 First, as the Ruin of the Army, then
 Of taking your Commission: But, by Heav'n,
 I swear, O *Marcian*! this I never did,
 Nor e'er intended it: Nor say I this
 To alter thy stern Visage; for with what
 Thou hast said, and done, and brought to my remem-
 I grow already weary of my Life. (brance,

Marc. My Lord, I take your Word: you do not know
 The Wounds which rage within your Country's Bowels;
 The horrid Usage of the suff'ring Soldier:

62 THEODOSIUS; or,

But why will not our *Theodosius* know?
 If you intrust the Government to others,
 That act these Crimes; who but your self's to blame?
 Be witness, O ye Gods! of my plain Dealing;
 Of *Marcian's* Honesty, howe'er degraded.
 I thank you for my Banishment: but alas!
 My Loss is little to what soon will follow.
 Reflect but on your self and your own Joys,
 Let not this Lethargy for ever hold you.
 'Twas rumour'd thro' the City that you lov'd,
 That your Espousals should be solemniz'd;
 When on a sudden here you send your Orders
 That this bright Favourite, the lov'd *Eudofia*,
 Should lose her Head.

Theo. Oh Heaven and Earth! What say'st thou?
 That I have seal'd the Death of my *Eudofia*?

Marc. 'Tis your own Hand and Signet: Yet I swear,
 Tho you have giv'n to Female Hands your sway,
 And therefore I, as well as the whole Army,
 For ever ought to curse all Woman kind;
 Yet when the Virgin came, as she was doom'd,
 And on the Scaffold, for that purpose rais'd
 Without the Walls, appear'd before the Army——

Theo. What! on a Scaffold! ha! before the Army!

Marc. How quickly was the Tide of Fury turn'd
 To soft Compassion and relenting Tears? But when the
 Sever'd the brightest Beauty of the Earth (Axe
 From that fair Body, had you heard the Groan,
 Which like a Peal of distant Thunder, ran
 Thro' all the armed Host, you would have thought,
 By the immediate Darkness that fell round us,
 Whole Nature was concern'd at such a Suffering,
 And all the Gods were angry.

Theo. Oh *Pulcheria*!

Cruel ambitious Sister, this must be
 Thy doing. Oh support me, noble *Marcian*!
 Now, now's the time, if thou dar'st strike; behold
 I offer thee my Breast; with my last Breath,
 I'll thank thee too, if now thou draw'st my Blood.

Were

The Force of Love.

63

Were I to live, thy Counsel shall direct me;

But 'tis too late——

[*He swoons.*

Marc. He faints! what, ho! there, *Lucius!* [*Enter*

My Lord the Emperor, *Eudofia* lives;

Lucius.

She's here, or will be in a minute, moment,

Quick as a Thought she calls you to the Temple.

Oh, *Lucius*, help——I've gone too far; but see,

He breathes again——*Eudofia* has awak'd him.

Theo. Did you not name *Eudofia*?

Marc. Yes, she lives;

I did but feign the story of her Death,

To find how near you plac'd her to your Heart:

And may the Gods rain all their Plagues upon me,

If ever I rebuke you thus again.

Yet 'tis most certain, that you sign'd her Death,

Not knowing what the wife *Pulcheria* offer'd,

Who left it in my Hand to startle you:

But by my Life and Fame, I did not think

It would have touch'd your Life. O pardon me,

Dear Prince, my Lord, my Emp'rour, Royal Master;

Droop not because I utter'd some rash Words,

And was a Mad-man——By th' Immortal Gods!

I love you as my Soul: whate'er I said,

My Thoughts were otherwise; believe these Tears,

Which do not use to flow: all shall be well.

I swear that there are Seeds in that sweet Temper,

To atone for all the Crimes in this bad Age.

Theo. I thank thee first for my *Eudofia*'s Life.

What but my Love could have call'd back that Life

Which thou hast made me hate? But oh, methought

'Twas hard, dear *Marcian*, very hard from thee,

From him I ever reverenc'd as my Father,

To hear so harsh a Message——but no more:

We are Friends: Thy Hand; nay, if thou wilt not rise,

And let me fold my Arms about thy Neck,

I'll not believe thy Love! In this forgive me.

First let me wed *Eudofia*, and we'll out;

We will, my General, and make amends

For all that's past: Glory and Arms ye call,

And *Marcian* leads me on——

64 THEODOSIUS; or,

Marc. Let her not rest then;
 Espouse her strain: I'll strike you at a heat.
 May this great Humour get large Growth within you;
 And be encourag'd by th' emboldning Gods.
 O what a sight will this be to the Soldier,
 To see me bring you dress'd in shining Armour,
 To head the shouting Squadrons!——O ye Gods!
 Methinks I hear the echoing Cries of Joy,
 The Sound of Trumpets, and the Beat of Drums.
 I see each starving Soldier bound from Earth,
 As if some God by Miracle had rais'd him;
 And with beholding you, grow fat again.
 Nothing but gazing Eyes, and opening Mouths,
 Cheeks red with Joy, and lifted Hands about you;
 Some wiping the glad Tears that trickle down
 With broken *Io's*, and with sobbing Raptures,
 Crying, to Arms; he's come; our Emperor's come
 To win the World. Why is not this far better
 Than lolling in a Lady's Lap, and sleeping,
 Fasting, or praying? Come, come, you shall be merry:
 And for *Eudisia*, she is your's already;
Marcian has said it, Sir, she shall be your's.

Theo. Oh *Marcian*! Oh my Brother; Father; all:
 Thou best of Friends, most faithful Counsellor,
 I'll find a Match for thee too ere I rest,
 To make thee love me. For when thou'rt with me,
 I'm strong and well; but when thou'rt gone, I'm no-
 (thing.

Enter Athenais, meeting Theodosius.

Theo. Alas! *Eudisia*, tell me what to say;
 For my full Heart can scarce bring forth a Word
 Of that which I have sworn to see perform'd.

Athen. I'm perfectly obedient to your Pleasure.

Theo. Well, then I come to tell thee, that *Varanes*
 Of all Mankind is nearest to my Heart;
 I love him, dear *Eudisia*: and to prove
 That Love on trial, all my Blood's too little;
 Ev'n thee, if I were sure to die this moment,
 (As Heav'n alone can tell how far my Fate

The Force of Love.

65

Is off!) O thou my Soul's most tender Joy,
With my last Breath I would bequeath him thee.

Athen. Then you are pleas'd, my Lord, to yield me to

Theo. No, my *Eudofia*; no, I will not yield thee (him.
While I have Life; for Worlds I will not yield thee:

Yet, thus far I'm engag'd to let thee know,

He loves thee, *Athenais*, more than ever;

He languishes, despairs, and dies like me:

And I have past my Word that he shall see thee.

Athen. Ah, Sir, what have you done against your self,
And me? Why have you past your fatal Word?

Why will you trust me, who am now afraid

To trust my self? Why do you leave me naked

To an Assault, who had made proof my Virtue,

With this sure Guard, never to see him more?

For, oh with trembling Agonies I speak it,

I cannot see a Prince, whom once I lov'd,

Bath'd in his Grief, and gasping at my Feet,

In all the violent Trances of Despair,

Without a Sorrow that perhaps may end me.

Theo. O ye severer Powers! too cruel Fate!

Did ever Love tread such a maze before?

Yet, *Athenais*, still I trust thy Virtue:

But if thy bleeding Heart cannot refrain,

Give, give thy self away; yet still remember,

That moment *Theodosius* is no more——

[*Ex. Theo. with Attic. Pulc. Leon.*

Athen. Now Glory! now, if ever thou didst work

In Woman's Mind, assist me——Oh, my Heart,

Why dost thou throb, as if thou wer't a breaking?

Down, down, I say, think on thy Injuries,

Thy Wrongs, thy Wrongs! 'Tis well my Eyes are dry,

And all within my Bosom now is still.

Enter Varanes, leaning on Arantes.

Ha! is this he? or is't *Varanes*' Ghost?

He looks as if he had bespoke his Grave,

Trembling and pale; I must not dare to view him.

For, Oh, I feel his Melancholy here,

And fear I shall too soon partake his Sickness.

66 THEODOSIUS; or,

Vara. Thus to the angry Gods offending Mortals,
Made sensible by some severe Affliction,
How all their Crimes are registred in Heav'n;
In that nice Court, how no rash Word escapes,
But ev'n extravagant Thoughts are all set down :
Thus the poor Penitents with fear approach
The reverend Shrines, and thus for Mercy bow ; [*Kneels.*
Thus melting too, they wash the hallowed Earth,
And groan to be forgiven——
Oh, Empress ! Oh, *Eudofia* ! such you are now,
These are your Titles, and I must not dare
Ever to call you *Athenais* more.

Athin. Rise, rise, my Lord, let me intreat you, rise,
I will not hear you in that humble Posture :
Rise, or I must withdraw——The World will blush
For you and me, should it behold a Prince,
Sprung from immortal *Cyrus*, on his Knees
Before the Daughter of a poor Philosopher.

Vara. 'Tis just, you righteous Gods ! my Doom is just;
Nor will I strive to deprecate her Anger.
If possible, I'll aggravate my Crimes,
That she may rage till she has broke my Heart :
For all I now desire, and let the Gods,
Those cruel Gods that join to my undoing,
Be Witnesses to this unnatural Wish,
Is to fall dead without a Wound before her.

Athen. O ye known Sounds ! But I must steel my Soul :
Methinks these Robes, my *Delia*, are too heavy.

Vara. Not worth a Word, a Look, nor one Regard !
Is then the nature of my Fault so heinous,
That when I come to take my eternal Leave,
You'll not vouchsafe to view me ? This is Scorn,
Which the fair Soul of gentle *Athenais*
Would ne'er have harbour'd——

Oh, for the sake of him, whom you ere long
Shall hold as fast as now your Wishes form him,
Give me a patient Hearing : for however
I talk of Death, and seem to loath my Life,
I would deliberate with my Fate a while,
With snatching Glances eye thee to the last ;

Pause

The Force of Love.

67

Pause o'er a Loss like that of *Athenais*,
And partly with my Ruin.

Athen. Speak, my Lord ;
To hear you is the Emperor's Command ;
And for that Cause I readily obey.

Vara. The Emperor, the Emperor's Command !
And for that Cause she readily obeys.
I thank you, Madam, that on any Terms
You condescend to hear me——

Know then, *Eudofia* : Ah, rather let me call thee
By the lov'd Name of *Athenais* still ;
That Name that I so often have invok'd,
And which was once auspicious to my Vows ;
So oft at Midnight sign'd amongst the Groves,
The River's Murmur, and the Echo's Burden ;
Which every Bird could sing, and Wind did bear :
By that dear Name, I make this Protestation,
By all that's good on Earth, or blest in Heav'n,
I swear I love thee more, far more than ever.
With conscious Blushes too, here, help me, Gods ;
Help me to tell her, tho to my Confusion,
And everlasting Shame ; yet I must tell her,
I lay the *Persian* Crown before her Feet.

Athen. My Lord, I thank you, and I express those
As nobly as you offer 'em, I return (Thanks
The Gift you make ; nor will I now upbraid you
With the Example of the Emperor :
Not but I know 'tis that that draws you on,
Thus to descend beneath your Majesty,
And swell the Daughter of a poor Philosopher
With hopes of being great.

Vara. Ah, Madam ! ah, you wrong me ; by the Gods,
I had repented ere I knew the Emp'r——

Athen. You find, perhaps too late, that *Athenais*,
However slighted for her Birth and Fortune,
Has something in her Person, and her Virtue,
Worth the regard of Emperors themselves ;
And, to return the Compliment you gave
My Father, *Leontine*, that poor Philosopher,
Whose utmost Glory is to have been your Tutor ;

68 THEODOSIUS; or,

I here protest, by Virtue, and by Glory,
I swear by Heav'n and all the Pow'rs Divine,
Th' abandon'd Daughter of that poor old Man
Shall ne'er be seated on the Throne of *Cyrus*.

Vara. O death to all my Hopes! what hast thou sworn?
To turn me wild? Ah, cursed Throne of *Cyrus*,
Would thou hadst been o'erturn'd and laid in Dust,
His Crown too Thunder-struck; my Father, all
The *Persian* Race, like poor *Darius*, ruin'd,
Blotted, and swept for ever from the World,
When first Ambition blasted thy Remembrance.

Athen. O Heav'n! I had forgot the base Affront
Offer'd by this proud Man; a Wrong so great,
It is remov'd beyond all hope of Mercy:
He had design'd to bribe my Father's Virtue,
And by unlawful Means

Fly from my sight, lest I become a Fury,
And break those Rules of Temperance I propos'd;
Fly, fly, *Varanes*! fly this sacred Place,
Where Virtue and Religion are profess'd:

This City will not harbour Infidels,
Traitors to Chastity, licentious Princes.
Be gone, I say, thou canst not here be safe;
Fly to Imperial Libertines abroad:

In Foreign Courts thou'lt find a thousand Beauties
That will comply for Gold; for Gold they'll weep,
For Gold be fond, as *Athenais* was,
And charm thee still as if they lov'd indeed.

Thou'lt find enough Companions too for Riot:
Luxuriant all, and Royal as thy self,
Tho thy loud Vices should rebound to Heav'n
Art thou not gone yet?

Vara. No, I am charm'd to hear you:
O from my Soul I do confess my self
The very blot of Honour; I am more black
Than thou, in all thy Heat of just Revenge,
With all thy glorious Eloquence, canst make me.

Athen. Away, *Varanes*.

Vara. Yes, Madam, I am going
Nay, by the Gods, I do not ask thee Pardon;

Nor

Nor while I live will I implore thy Mercy :
 But when I 'm dead, if as thou dost return
 With happy *Theodosius* from the Temple,
 If as thou go'st in Triumph thro' the Streets,
 Thou chance to meet the cold *Varanes* there,
 Born by his Friends to his eternal Home ;
 Stop then, O *Athenais* ! and behold me :
 Say as thou hang'st about the Emp'r's Neck,
 Alas ! my Lord, this Sight is worth our pity.
 If to those pitying Words thou add a Tear,
 Or give one parting Groan — If possible,
 If the good Gods will grant my Soul the freedom,
 I'll leave my Shroud, and wake from Death to thank thee.

Athen. He shakes my Resolution from the bottom :
 My bleeding Heart too speaks in his behalf,
 And says my Virtue has been too severe.

Vara. Farewel ! O Empress : No, *Athenais*, now
 I will not call thee by that tender Name,
 Since cold Despair begins to freeze my Bosom,
 And all my Pow'rs are now resolv'd on Death.
 'Tis said that from my Youth I have been rash,
 Cholerick, and hot ; but let the Gods now judge
 By my last wish, if ever patient Man
 Did calmly bear so great a Loss as mine.
 Since 'tis so doom'd, by Fate you must be wedded,
 For your own Peace, when I am laid in Earth,
 Forget that e'er *Varanes* had a Being ;
 Turn all your Soul to *Theodosius*' Bosom.
 Continue Gods their Days, and make 'em long :
Lucina wait upon their fruitful *Hymen*,
 And many Children, beauteous as the Mother,
 And pious as the Father, make 'em smile.

Athen. O Heav'ns !

Vara. Farewel—I'll trouble you no more :
 The Malady that's lodg'd within grows stronger ;
 I feel the shock of my approaching Fate :
 My Heart too trembles at his distant march ;
 Nor can I utter more, if you shou'd ask me.
 Thy Arm, *Aranthes* ! O farewel for ever——

Athen.

70 THEODOSIUS; or,

*Athen. Varanes, stay, and ere you go for ever,
Let me unfold my Heart.*

Vara. O Athenais!

What further cruelty hast thou in store
To add to what I suffer?

Athen. Since it is doom'd

That we must part, let's part as Lovers should,
As those that have lov'd long, and loved well.

Vara. Art thou so good? O Athenais, oh!

*Athen. First from my Soul I pity and forgive you;
I pardon you that hasty little Error,
Which yet has been the cause of both our Ruins.
And let this Sorrow witness for my Heart,
How eagerly I wish it had not been;
And since I cannot keep it, take it all:
Take all the Love, O Prince, I ever bore you.
Or, if 'tis possible, I'll give you more;
Your noble Carriage forces this Confession:
I rage, I burn, I bleed, I die for Love;
I am distracted with this World of Passion.*

Vara. Gods! cruel Gods! take notice I forgive you.

Athen. Alas! my Lord, my weaker tender Sex

Has not your manly Patience, cannot curb

This Fury in; therefore I let it loose:

Spite of my rigid Duty, I will speak

With all the dearthness of a dying Lover,

Farewel most lovely, and most lov'd of Men;

Why comes this dying Paleness o'er thy Face?

Why wander thus thy Eyes? Why dost thou bend

As if the fatal weight of Death were on thee?

Vara. Speak yet a little more: For, by the Gods,

And as I prize those blessed happy Moments,

I swear, O *Athenais!* all is well;

O never better.

Athen. I doubt thee, dear Varanes;

Yet, if thou dy'st, I shall not long be from thee.

Once more farewel, and take these last Embraces.

Oh! I could crush him to my Heart! Farewel,

And as a dying Pledge of my last Love,

Take this, which all thy Pray'rs could never charm.

What have I done? oh lead me, lead me, *Delia.*

Ah,

The Force of Love.

71

Ah, Prince farewell! Angels protect and guard thee.

Vara. Turn back, O *Athenais*! and behold me;

Hear my last Words, and then farewell for ever.

Thou hast undone me more by this Confession:

You say, you swear, you love me more than ever;

Yet I must see you marry'd to another:

Can there be any Plague or Hell like this?

O *Athenais*! Whither shall I turn me?

You have brought me back to Life but oh, what Life?

To a Life more terrible than a thousand Deaths.

Like one that had been buried in a Trance,

With racking Starts, he wakes and gazes round,

Forc'd by despair his whirling Limbs to wound,

And bellow like a Spirit under ground;

Still urg'd by Fate, to turn, to toss, and rave,

Tormented, dash'd, and broken in the Grave.

[*Exeunt.*]



ACT V. SCENE I.

Athenais dress'd in Imperial Robes, and crown'd: A Table
with a Bowl of Poison.

Athen. Midnight Marriage! must I to the
Temple,

A Thus, at the Murderer's hour? 'Tis
wond'rous strange!

But so thou say'st my Father has commanded;
And that's a mighty Reason.

Delia. Th' Emperor in compassion to the Prince,
Who would, perhaps, fly to extravagance,
If he in publick should resolve to espouse you,
Contriv'd by this close Marriage to deceive him.

Athen. Go fetch thy Lute, and sing those Lines I gave
So, now I am alone, yet my Soul shakes: (thee;
For where this deadly Draught may carry me,
The Heav'ns can only tell; yet I'm resolv'd

To

72 THEODOSIUS; or,

To drink it off in spite of Consequence.
 Whisper him, O some Angel ! what I'm doing ;
 By sympathy of Soul let him too tremble,
 To hear my wondrous Faith, my wondrous Love ;
 Whose Spirit not content with an Ovation
 Of ling'ring Fate, with Triumph thus resolv'd :
 Thus in the rapid Chariot of the Soul,
 To mount and dare as never Woman dar'd : [Drinks.
 'Tis done, haste, *Delia*, haste ! come bring thy Lute,
 And sing my Wafrage to immortal Joys,
 Methinks I can't but smile at my own Bravery,
 Thus from my lowest Fortune rais'd to Empire,
 Crown'd and adorn'd ! worshipp'd by half the Earth,
 While a young Monarch dies for my Embraces :
 Yet now to wave the Glories of the World,
 O my *Varanes* ! tho my Birth's unequal,
 My Virtue sure has richly recompens'd,
 And quite out-gone Example !

S O N G.

1.

*Ah cruel bloody Fate,
 What canst thou now do more ?
 Alas, 'tis all too late,
 Philander to restore :*
*Why should the Heavenly Powers persuade
 Poor Mortals to believe,
 That they guard us here,
 And reward us there,
 Yet all our Joys deceive ?*

2.

*Her Ponyard then she took,
 And held it in her Hand ;
 And with a dying Look,
 Cry'd, thus I Fate command :*
*Philander ! Ah my Love I come,
 To meet thy Shade below ;
 Ah, I come, she cry'd,*

With

The Force of Love.

73

With a Wound so wide,
There needs no second Blow.

3.

In Purple Waves her Blood
Ran streaming down the Floor,
Unmov'd she saw the Flood,
And blest her dying Hour :
Philander ! Ah, Philander ! still
The bleeding Phillis cry'd :
She wept awhile,
And forc'd a Smile ;
Then clos'd her Eyes and dy'd,

Enter Pulcheria.

Pulch. How fares my dear *Eudofia* ? Ha, thou look'st,
Or else the Tapers cheat my sight, like one
That's fitter for thy Tomb than *Cesar's* Bed :
A fatal Sorrow dims thy shaded Eyes,
And in despite of all thy Ornaments,
Thou seem'st to me the Ghost of *Athenais*.

Athen. And what's the Punishment, my dear *Pulcheria* ?
What Torments are allotted those sad Spirits,
Who groaning with the Burden of Despair,
No longer will endure the Cares of Life ;
But boldly set themselves at Liberty,
Thro' the dark Caves of Death to wander on,
Like wildred Travellers without a Guide,
Eternal Rovers in the gloomy Maze,
Where scarce the Twilight of an Infant Moon,
By a faint Glimmer checkering thro' the Trees,
Reflects to dismal View the walking Ghosts,
And never hope to reach the Blessed Fields ?

Pulch. No more o' that, *Atticus* shall resolve thee ;
But see, he waits thee from the Emperor ;
Thy Father too attends.

G

Enter

74 THEODOSIUS; or,

Enter Leontine, Atticus, &c.

Leont. Come, *Athenais* ! Ha, what now in Tears ?
 O fall of Honour, but no more ; I charge thee,
 I charge thee, as thou ever hop'st my Blessing,
 Or fear'st my Curse, to banish from thy Soul
 All thoughts, if possible, o' th' Memory
 Of that ungrateful Prince that has undone thee.
 Attend me to the Temple on this Instant,
 To make the Emperor thine, this Night to wed him,
 And lie within his Arms.

Athen. Yes, Sir, I'll go —
 Let me but dry my Eyes, and I will go :
Eudisia, this unhappy Bride shall go,
 Thus like a Victim crown'd and doom'd to bleed,
 I'll wait you to the Altar, wed the Emperor,
 And if he pleases, lie within his Arms.

Leont. Thou art my Child agen.

Athen. But do not, Sir, imagine any Charms,
 Or Threatnings shall compel me,
 Never to think of poor *Varanes* more :
 No, my *Varanes* : No —
 While I have Breath, I will remember thee ;
 To thee alone I will my Thoughts confine,
 And all my Meditations shall be thine :
 The Image of thy Woes my Soul shall fill,
 Fate and my End, and thy Remembrance still,
 As in some Poplar Shade the Nightingale,
 With piercing Moans, does her lost Young bewail,
 Which the rough Hind, observing as they lay
 Warm in their downy Nest, had stoln away ;
 But she in mournful Sounds does still complain,
 Sings all the Night, tho all her Songs are vain,
 And still renews her miserable strain :
 So my *Varanes*, till my Death comes on,
 Shall sad *Eudisia* thy dear Loss bemoan.

[*Ex. Athenais, Atticus.*]

SCENE

SCENE II.

Enter Varanes.

Vara. 'Tis Night, dead Night, and weary Nature lies
So fast, as if she never were to rise :

No Breath of Wind now whispers thro' the Trees ;

No Noise at Land, nor Murmur in the Seas ;

Lean Wolves forget to howl at Night's pale Noon ;

No wakeful Dogs bark at the silent Moon ;

Nor bay the Ghosts that glide with Horror by,

To view the Caverns where their Bodies lie ;

The Ravens perch, and no Presages give,

Nor to the Windows of the Dying cleave ;

The Owls forget to scream ; no Midnight sound

Calls drowsy Echo from the hollow Ground ;

In Vaults the walking Fires extinguish'd lie ;

The Stars, Heav'n's Sentry, wink and seem to die.

Such universal Silence spreads below,

Thro' the vast Shades where I am doom'd to go ;

Nor shall I need a Violence to wound :

The Storm is here that drives me on the Ground,

Sure means to make the Soul and Body part,

A burning Fever, and a broken Heart.

What, ho, *Aranthes* !

[Enter *Aranthes*.]

I sent thee to the Apartment of

Athenais ! I sent thee, did I not, to be admitted ?

Aran. You did, my Lord ; but Oh !

I fear to give you an Account.

Vara. Alas !

Aranthes, I am got on the other side

Of this bad World ; and now am past all fear.

O ye avenging Gods ! is there a Plague

Among your boarded Bolts, and Heaps of Vengeance ;

Beyond the mighty Loss of *Athenais* ?

'Tis Contradiction ; speak, then speak *Aranthes*.

For all Misfortunes, if compar'd with that,

Will make *Varanes* smile.—

76 THEODOSIUS; or,

Aran. My Lord, the Empress,
Crown'd and adorn'd with the Imperial Robes,
At this dead time of Night with silent Pomp,
As they design'd from all to keep it secret,
But chiefly sure from you ; I say, the Empress
Is now conducted by the General,
Atticus and her Father, to the Temple,
There to espouse the Emperor *Theodosius*.

Vara. Say'st thou? Is't certain ! hah.

Aran. Most certain, Sir, I saw 'em in Procession.

Vara. Give me thy Sword. Malicious Fate ! O Fortune !
O giddy Chance ! O turn of Love and Greatness !
Marry'd ! She has kept her Promise now indeed ;
And Oh ! her pointed Fame and nice Revenge,
Have reach'd their end. No, *Aranthes* ! No !
I will not stay the lazy Execution
Of a slow Fever ; Give me thy Hand, and swear
By all the Love and Duty that thou ow'st me,
T' observe the last Commands that I shall give thee ;
Stir not against my purpose, as thou fear'st
My Anger and Disdain ; nor dare to oppose me
With troublesome unnecessary formal Reasons ;
For what my Thought has doom'd, my Hand shall seal.
I charge thee hold it stedfast to my Heart,
Fix'd as the Fate that throws me on the Point.
Tho I have liv'd a *Persian*, I will fall
As fair, as fearless, and as full resolv'd
As any *Greek* or *Roman* of 'em all.

Aran. What you command is terrible, but sacred ;
And to atone for this too cruel Duty,
My Lord, I'll follow you——

Vara. I charge thee nor :
But when I am dead, take the attending Slaves,
And bear me, with my Blood distilling down,
Streight to the Temple ; lay me, O *Aranthes* !
Lay my cold Coarse at *Athenais*' Feet,
And say, Oh why, why do my Eyes run o'er !
Say, with my latest Gasps I groan'd for Pardon.
Just here my Friend, hold fast, and fix the Sword :
I feel the Artery, where the Life-Blood lies ;

It

It heaves against the Point——Now, O ye Gods,
If for the greatly wretched you have room,
Prepare my Place, for dauntless lo I come!
The force of Love thus makes the mortal Wound,
And *Athenais* sends me to the Ground. [*Kills himself.*]

SCENE III. *The outward Part of
the Temple.*

*Enter Pulcheria and Julia at one Door, Marcian and
Lucius at another.*

Pulch. Look, *Julia*, see the pensive *Marcian* comes;
'Tis to my Wish; I must no longer lose him,
Lest he should leave the Court indeed: he looks
As if some mighty Secret work'd within him,
And labour'd for a Vent; inspire me Woman,
That what my Soul desires above the World,
May seem impos'd and forc'd on my Affections——

Luc. I say she loves you, and she stays to hear it
From your own Mouth: Now, in the Name of all
The Gods at once, my Lord, why are you silent?
Take heed, Sir, mark your Opportunity;
For if the Woman lays it in your Way,
And you o'er-see it, she is lost for ever.

Marc. Madam, I come to take my eternal Leave,
Your Doom has banish'd me, and I obey:
The Court and I shake hands, and now we part,
Never to see each other more; the Court
Where I was born, and bred a Gentleman,
No more, till your illustrious Bounty rais'd me,
And drew the Earth-born Vapour to the Clouds:
But, as the Gods ordain'd it, I have lost;
I know not how, thro' Ignorance, your Grace;
And now the Exhalation of my Glory
Is quite consum'd, and vanish'd into Air.

Pulch. Proceed, Sir——

Marc. Yet let those Gods that doom'd me to displeasure
Be Witnesses how much I honour you——

78 THEODOSIUS; or,

Thus, worshipping, I swear by your bright self,
I leave this infamous Court with more content
Than Fools and Flatterers seek it. But Oh Heaven!
I cannot go if still your Hate pursues me;
Yes, I declare it is impossible
To go to Banishment without your Pardon.

Pulch. You have it, *Marcian*; is there ought beside,
That you would speak, for I am free to hear?

Marc. Since I shall never see you more, what hinders
But my last Words should here avow the Truth?
Know then, Imperial Princess, matchless Woman,
Since first you cast your Eyes upon my Meanness,
Ev'n till you rais'd me to my envy'd Height,
I have in secret lov'd you——

Pulch. Is this *Marcian*?

Marc. You frown! but I am still prepar'd for all;
I say I lov'd you, and I love you still,
More than my Life, and equal to my Glory.
Methinks the warring Spirit that inspires
This Frame, the very Genius of old *Rome*,
That makes me talk without the Fear of Death,
And drives my daring Soul to Acts of Honour,
Flames in your Eyes! our Thoughts too are a-kin,
Ambitious, fierce, and burn alike for Glory:
Now, by the Gods, I lov'd you in your Fury,
In all the Thunder that quite riv'd my Hopes;
I lov'd you most, ev'n when you did destroy me.
Madam, I've spoke my Heart, and cou'd say more,
But that I see it grieves you; your high Blood
Frets at the Arrogance and saucy Pride
Of this bold Vagabond: may the Gods forgive me!
Farewel; a worthier General may succeed me;
But none more faithful to the Emperor's Interest,
Than him you're pleas'd to call the Traitor *Marcian*.

Pulch. Come back, you have subtly play'd your Part in-
For first th' Emperor, whom you lately school'd, (deed;
Restores you your Commission; next commands you,
As you're a Subject, not to leave the Court:
Next, but Oh Heaven! which way shall I express
His cruel Pleasure? he that is so mild

In all things else, yet obstinate in this,
Spite of my Tears, my Birth, and my Disdain,
Commands me, as I dread his high Displeasure,
O *Marcian*! to receive you as my Husband.

Marc. Ha, *Lucius*! What, what does my Fate intend?

Luc. Pursue her, Sir, 'tis as I said, she yields,
And rages that you follow her no faster!

Pulch. Is then at last my great Authority,
And my intrusted Pow'r declin'd to this?
Yet, oh my Fate, what way can I avoid it?
He charg'd me strait to wait him to the Temple;
And there resolve, O *Marcian*! on this Marriage,
Now generous Soldier, as you're truly noble,
Oh help me forth, lost in this Labyrinth;
Help me to loose this more than Gordian Knot,
And make me and yourself for ever happy.

Marc. Madam, I'll speak as briefly as I can,
And as a Soldier ought; the only way
To help this Knot, is yet to tie it faster.
Since then the Emperor has resolv'd you mine,
For which I will for ever thank the Gods,
And make this Holiday thro'out my Life,
I take him at his Word, and claim his Promise;
The Empire of the World shall not redeem you.
Nay, weep not, Madam, tho my Outside's rough,
Yet, by those Eyes, your Soldier has a Heart
Compassionate and tender as a Virgin's:
Ev'n now it bleeds to see those falling Sorrows;
Perhaps this Grief may move the Emperor
To a Repentance! Come then to the Trial;
For by my Arms, my Life, and dearer Honour,
If you go back when given me by his Hand,
In distant Wars my Fate I will deplore,
And *Marcian's* Name shall ne'er be heard of more.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE,

80 THEODOSIUS; or,

SCENE, *The Temple.*

Theodosius, Athenais, Atticus *joining their Hands*—
 Marcian, Pulcheria, Lucius, Julia, Delia, &c. Leontine.

Attic. *The more than Gordian Knot is ty'd,
 Which Death's strong Arm shall ne'er divide;
 For when to Bliss ye wasted are,
 Your Spirits shall be wedded there.
 Waters are lost, and Fires will die;
 But Love alone can Fate defy.*

Enter Arantes with the Body of Varanes.

Aran. Where is the Empress? Where shall I find Eu-
 By Fate I'm sent to tell that cruel Beauty, (*dofia?*)
 She has robb'd the World of Fame, her Eyes have giv'n
 A Blast to the big Blossom of the War;
 Behold him there nipt in his flow'ry Morn,
 Compell'd to break his Promise of a Day;
 A Day that Conquest would have made her boast;
 Behold her Laurel wither'd to the Root,
 Canker'd and kill'd by *Athenais'* Scorn.

Athen. Dead, dead, *Varanes!*

Theo. Oh ye eternal Pow'rs
 That guide the World! Why do you shock our Reason
 With Acts like these, that lay our Thoughts in dust?
 Forgive me Heav'n this Start, or elevate
 Imagination more, and make it nothing.
 Alas! alas, *Varanes!* but speak, *Arantes,*
 The manner of his Fate: Groans choak my Words;
 But speak, and we will answer thee with Tears.

Aran. His Fever would, no doubt, by this have done
 What some few Minutes past his Sword perform'd;
 He heard from me your Progress to the Temple,
 How you design'd at Midnight to deceive him
 By a clandestine Marriage: But, my Lord,
 Had you beheld his Racks at my Relation;
 Or, had your Empress seen him in those Torments,
 When

When from his dying Eyes, swoln to the Brim,
The big round Drops roll'd down his manly Face;
When from his hallowed Breast a murmuring Croud
Of Groans rush'd forth, and echo'd, All is well:
Then had you seen him, Oh ye cruel Gods!
Rush on the Sword I held against his Breast,
And dye it to the Hilt, with these last Words——
Bear me to *Athenais*——

Athen. Give me way, my Lord,
I have most strictly kept my Promise with you,
I am your Bride, and you can ask no more;
Or if you did, I am past the Power to give:
But here! Oh here! on his cold bloody Breast,
Thus let me breathe my last.

Theo. Oh Empress, what, what can this Transport mean?
Are these our Nuptials? these my promis'd Joys?

Athen. Forgive me, Sir, this last respect I pay
These sad Remains——And, Oh thou mighty Spirit,
If yet thou art not mingled with the Stars,
Look down and hear the wretched *Athenais*,
When thou shalt know, before I gave consent
To this indecent Marriage, I had taken
Into my Veins a cold and deadly Draught,
Which soon will render me, alas, unfit
For the warm Joys of an Imperial Lover,
And make me ever thine, yet keep my Word
With *Theodosius*. Wilt not thou forgive me?

Theo. Poison'd to free thee from the Emperor!
Oh *Athenais*! thou hast done a Deed
That tears my Heart: what have I done against thee,
That thou shouldst brand me thus with Infamy
And everlasting Shame! thou might'st have made
Thy Choice without this cruel Act of Death;
I left thee to thy Will: And, in requital,
Thou hast murder'd all my Fame——

Athen. Oh pardon me!
I lay my dying Body at your Feet,
And beg, my Lord, with my last Sighs intreat you
T' impute the Fault, if 'tis a Fault, to Love;
And the Ingratitude of *Athenais*

To her too cruel Stars : Remember too,
I begg'd you would not let me see the Prince,
Presaging what has happen'd ; yet my Word,
As to our Nuptials, was inviolable.

Theo. Ha ! she is going ! see her languishing Eyes
Draw in their Beams ; the Sleep of Death is on her.

Athen. Farewel, my Lord ! alas ! alas, *Karanes*,
To embrace thee now is not Immodesty ;
Or if it were, I think my bleeding Heart
Would make me criminal in Death to clasp thee,
Break all the tender Niceties of Honour,
To fold thee thus, and warm thee into Life.
For oh what Man, like him, cou'd Woman move !
Oh Prince belov'd ! Oh Spirit most divine !
Thus by my Death, I give thee all my Love,
And seal my Soul and Body ever thine— [Dies.

Theo. Oh *Marcian* ! Oh *Pulcheria* ! did not the Power,
Whom we adore, plant all his Thunderbolts
Against Self-murderers, I would perish too :
But as I am, I swear to leave the Empire :
To thee, my Sister, I bequeath the World ;
And yet a Gift more great, the gallant *Marcian* :
On then, my Friend, now shew thy Roman Spirit :
As to her Sex fair *Athenais* was,
Be thou to thine a Pattern of true Honour :
Thus we'll atone for all the present Crimes,
That yet it may be said in after-times,

No Age with such Examples cou'd compare,
So great, so good, so virtuous, and so fair !

[Ex. omnes.

F I N I S.

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